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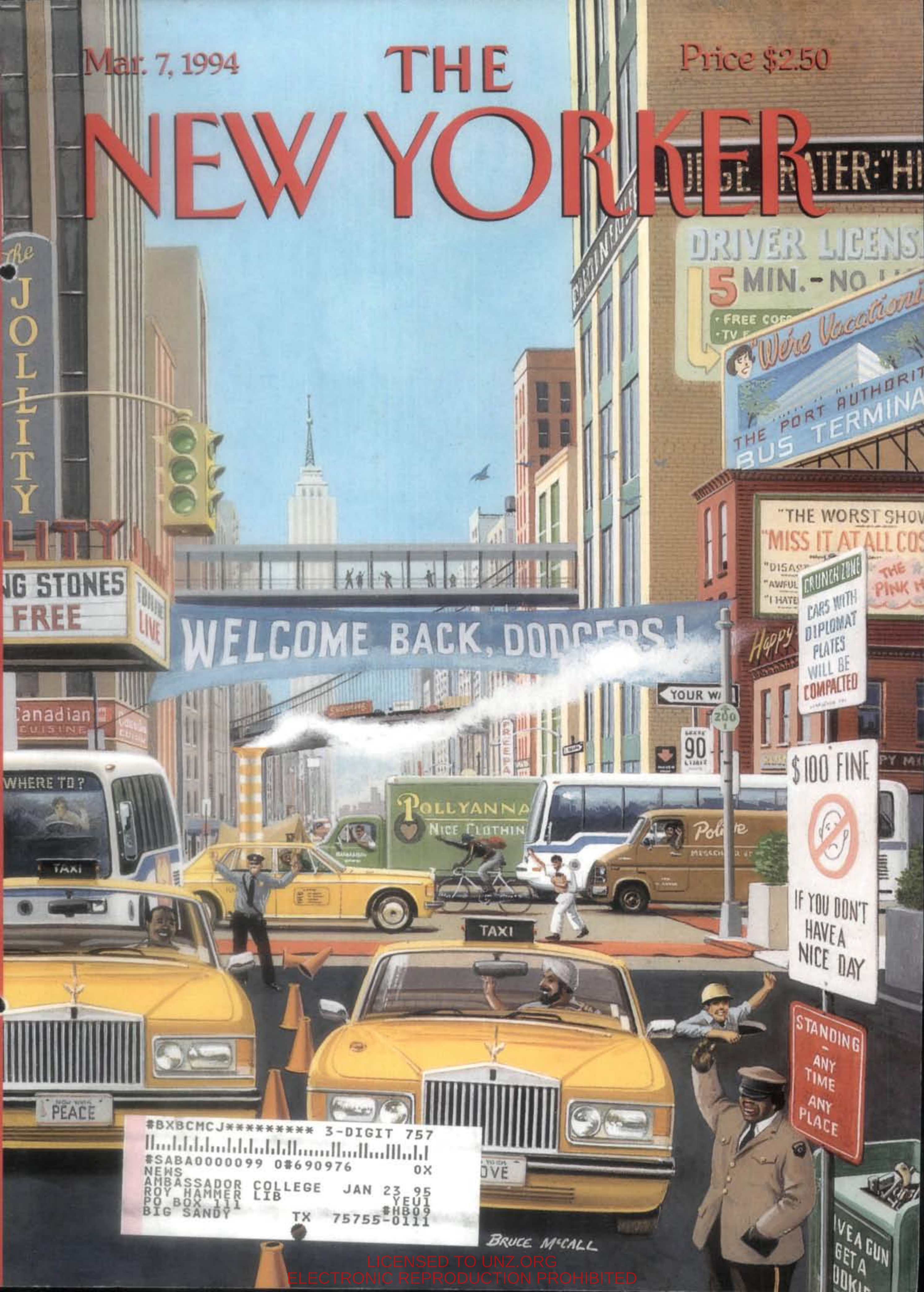

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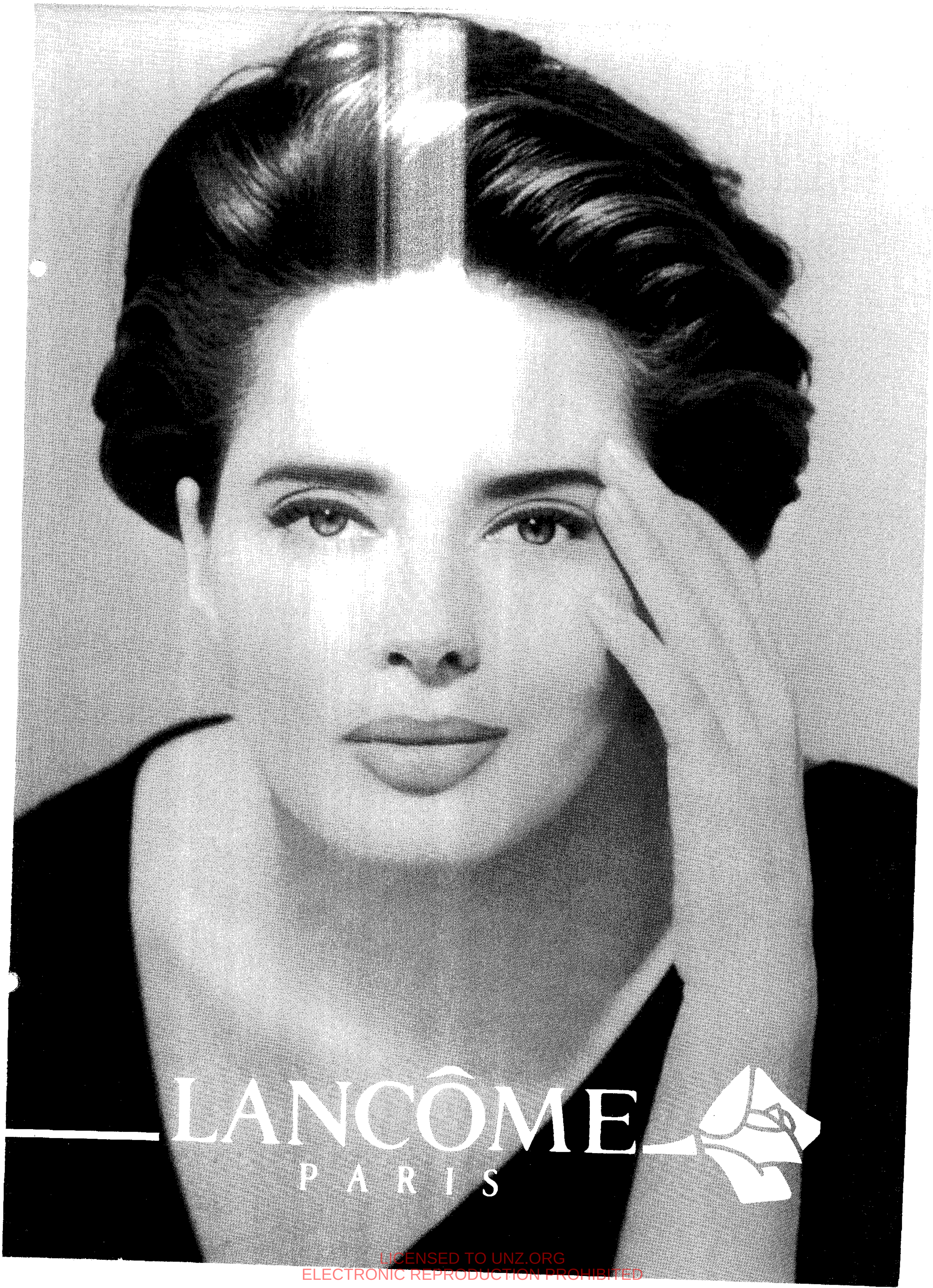
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THE NEW YORKER

MARCH 7, 1994

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COMMENT

HELP FOR SEX OFFENDERS

RECENTLY, a debate has arisen in this country over requests by sex criminals that they be permitted to undergo the surgical operation known as orchiectomy—more plainly, castration. The argument began in 1992, when Steve Allen Butler, a previously convicted child rapist, asked Judge Michael McSpadden, of the 209th Criminal District Court, in Houston, to let him be castrated rather than go to prison. McSpadden acceded to this request, setting off a hubbub that raged through the talk shows. Local black leaders contended that the bargain was racist, because the offender in the case was black. The director of the Rape Crisis Program at the Houston Area Women's Center opposed castration on principle, even when it was voluntary. She asserted that rape is a crime of violence, not of sex, and therefore the operation would not affect Butler's tendency to offend. The general counsel of the American Civil Liberties Union in Houston was already on record as opposing castration, having raised the spectre of Nazi sterilization programs. In the face of the controversy, doctors who had volunteered to perform the operation backed out, leaving the judge with no option but to send Butler to prison.

Since then, however, other sex offenders have come forward with similar requests. They draw attention to the failure of our present approaches to dealing with sex criminals. A comprehensive study of the effectiveness of various therapies which appeared in the *Psychological Bulletin* in 1989 concluded that "the recidivism rate for treated offenders is not lower than that for untreated offenders; if anything, it tends to be higher." Other studies have reported equally dismal findings. Sex criminals reoffend at high rates no matter what the treatment.

The State of Florida, once a pioneer in the humane treatment of sex offenders, has thrown up its hands and retreated to long prison sentences. Washington State recently enacted a "sexual predator" law, which provides indefinite terms of confinement for habitual offenders. Governor Pete Wilson, of California, now running for reëlection,

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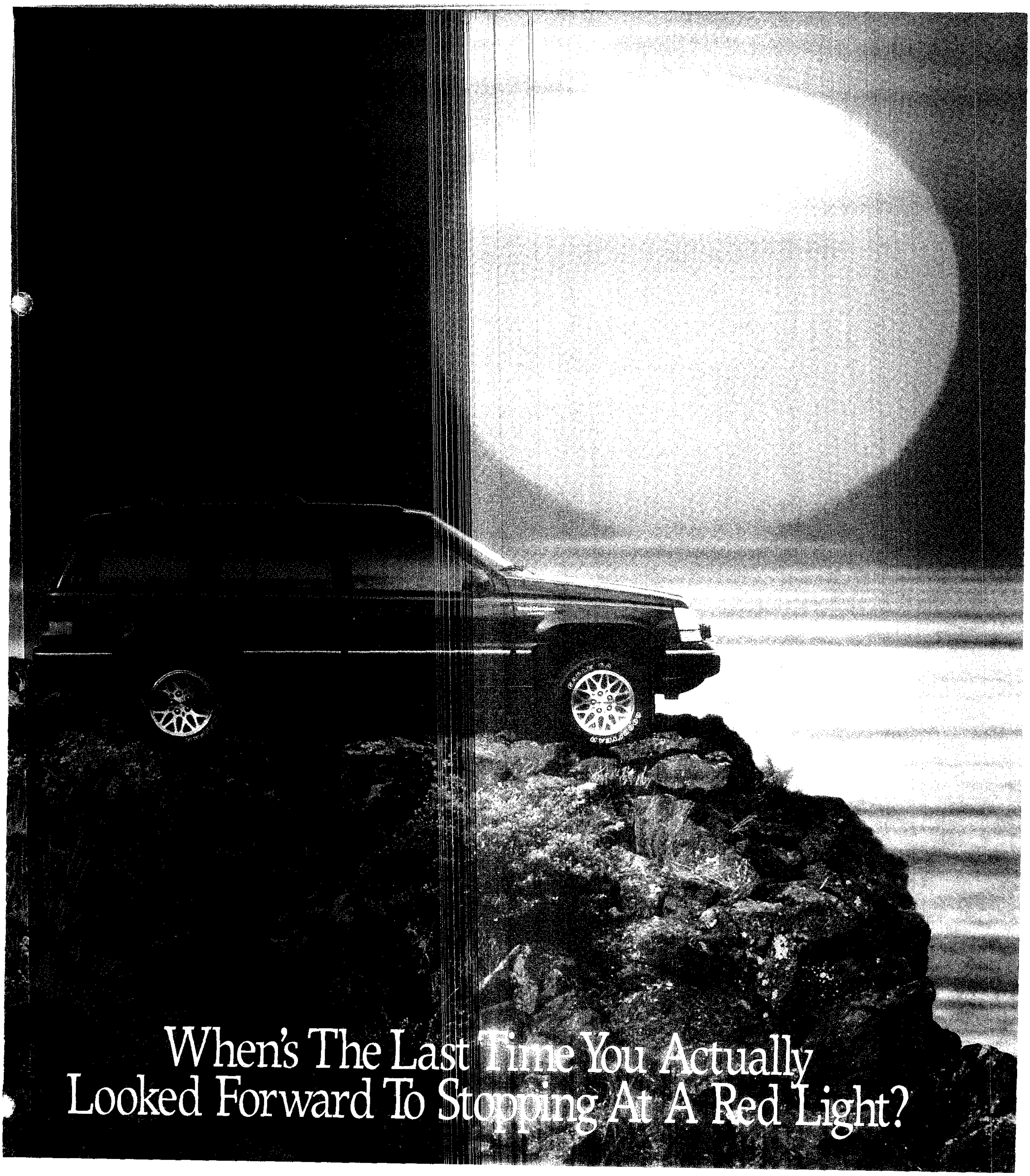
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has proposed life sentences for some *first-time* sex offenders. Other states have continued to explore therapeutic approaches ranging from role-playing to olfactory aversion therapy. According to Dr. William Pithers, the psychologist who directs Vermont's program, "the most successful candidates for treatment are men who have no other criminal record, have an established network of family and friends, and are not so preoccupied by their fantasies that they think of them hours a day." Few offenders meet such standards.

One out of six prisoners in the federal and state systems is a sex offender. The offenses include everything from exhibitionism to pedophilia and rape. Given the compulsive nature of the behavior of sex criminals, their share of the prison population is bound to rise with the passage of the "three strikes and you're out" proposals now sweeping through Congress and the legislatures. Although there are differences between men who fondle and men who rape, most sex criminals actually commit a variety of offenses as well as an appalling number of them. An eight-year study by Emory University researchers of five hundred and sixty-one male offenders who had voluntarily sought treatment reported a total of 291,737 specific acts committed against 195,407 victims. The average offender had been arrested in about one out of thirty crimes he committed; some had never been arrested at all.

Can a sex offender be cured of his need to offend? Of course he can, given the will to change, given the opportunity, given the proper care and treatment. Unfortunately, these elements rarely meet in the case of the chronic offender, and, even when they do, the struggle toward reform is likely to be lengthy and marked by failure. Anyone who has gone through the torment of giving up smoking or drinking or of following a prolonged diet can testify to the difficulty of changing a compulsive behavior. And yet, when the urge to eat or smoke becomes overwhelming, the consequences are merely personal. When sex offenders fail, other lives are destroyed.

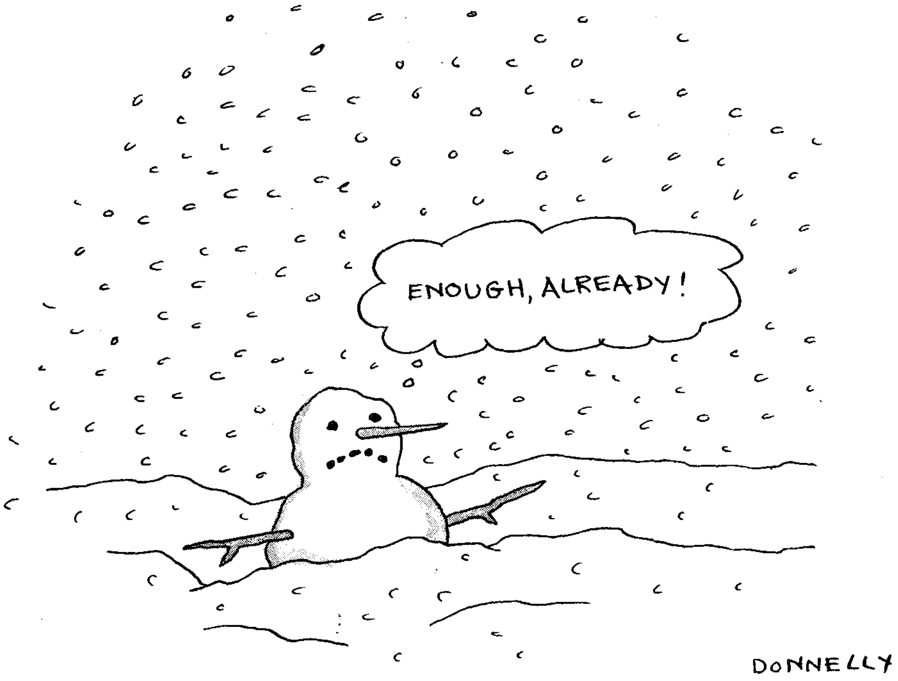
Why, then, resist the demands of men who are willing to risk sacrificing sexual activity in order to be free of their damaging impulses? Most of the arguments against voluntary castration are based on misconceptions, such as the common belief that it is a barbaric practice that has been used only in Third World countries. The fact is that it has been effectively and humanely used as treatment in Denmark, Czechoslovakia, Holland, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland, Sweden, and Finland. A 1973 Swiss study of a hundred and twenty-one castrated offenders found that the rate of reoffending dropped to 4.1 per cent, compared with 76.9 per cent before the operation. A Danish study in the sixties, which followed as many as nine hundred castrated sex offenders, found that recidivism rates dropped to 2.2 per cent.

Many European countries have turned to so-called chemical castration, which involves injections of female hormones, and this treatment is also common in the United States and Canada. But, while chemical castration effectively blunts the male sex drive, it may place the subject at risk for certain medical problems, including gallstones and diabetes. Moreover, such programs, both here and abroad, are plagued by dropouts; and as soon as the injections cease the sexual drive returns to its previous level.

That surgical castration is permanent and irreversible is a source of alarm to its opponents and of security to its advocates. An orchiectomy is not a Bobbitt-like mutilation. It involves removing the testicles from the scrotum and replacing them with silicone prostheses that make the procedure virtually undetectable. The operation is far less invasive than a hysterectomy, for instance, or many forms of cosmetic surgery. Nor is it necessarily a "sexual death sentence," as some opponents have called it. A 1991 Czech study of eighty-four castrated sexual delinquents found that eighteen per cent were capable of occasional intercourse and that twenty-one per cent lived in a stable heterosexual partnership. Only three men committed another sexual offense after castration, and those offenses were not of an aggressive character. Similarly, in the Danish study none of the rapists were found to rape again.

Some opponents of the castration option, while conceding its effectiveness, attack it on moral grounds. Here an odd double standard comes into play. A woman who suffers from excessive premenstrual tension may choose to have her uterus removed. A woman who is carrying a baby she doesn't want (and many such women are rape victims) may elect to have an abortion. But a man who molests children or brutalizes women can't ask to have his testicles removed, because that would be barbarous.

Our society is so squeamish when it comes to discussing sexual deviance that we tend to demonize sex offenders, forgetting that in many cases they themselves are victims, not only of sexual abuse in their own childhood but also of their overwhelming sexual impulses. Most of them, every time they exercise their sexual preference, break the law. It amounts to fraud when we offer these men treatment that doesn't work. If castration helps, why not let them have what they want? ♦



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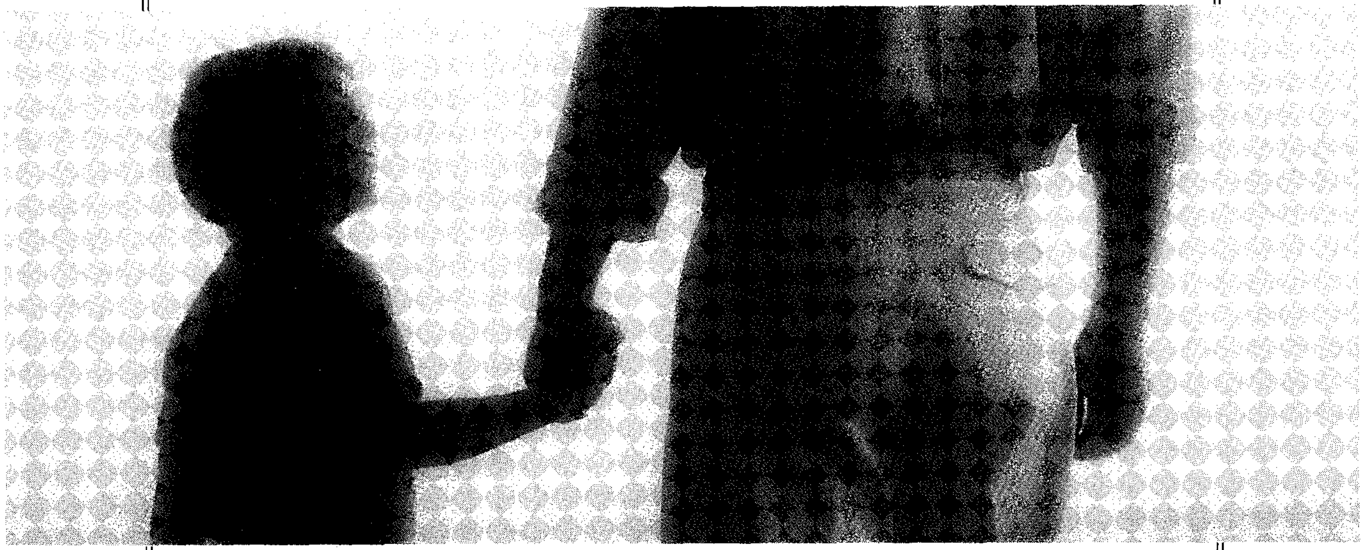

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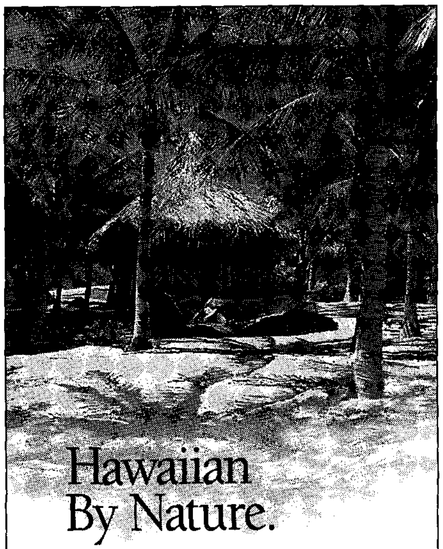

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IN THE MAIL

FREE-MARKET COMPASSION

After reading James Traub's excellent article on the Manhattan Institute (Annals of Ideas, February 7th), one might suppose that similar free-market think tanks around the country "remain obscure bastions of conservative ideology." One of them, however—the Mackinac Center, in Michigan—has been the driving force in a radical overhaul of that state's government. John Engler, Michigan's governor, helped found Mackinac, and the center has supplied many of his advisers. Engler has presented himself as a national advocate of welfare reform. Two years ago, in a move that Mackinac called "free-market compassion," Engler abolished a welfare program that had supported more than eighty-two thousand people, and tried to establish a network of private homeless shelters that would handle the resulting increase in homelessness. Not surprisingly, voluntary funding from individuals and corporations failed to replace the lost government funds. The free-market philosophy espoused by the Manhattan Institute and the Mackinac Center states that the private sector can do almost anything better than government can, but government got into areas like education and welfare for good reasons. What has happened in Michigan reminds us of them.

PETER OVERBY
Common Cause Magazine
Washington, D.C.

TECHNO TYRANNY

In Ken Auletta's article on John Malone and TCI, the company he runs (Annals of Communications, February 7th), one item stood out with terrible clarity: "In 1973, when TCI and city officials in Vail, Colorado, could not agree on cable rates, TCI pulled all its programming for an entire weekend, substituting on TV screens the names and home phone numbers of city officials. The city surrendered." It seems to me that Vice-President Gore is wise to give the importance he does to understanding the "information superhighway," for it seems that only a great deal of thoughtful deliberation will prevent the advent of a new kind of tyranny.

JAMES MUNVES
New York City

REASONABLE DOUBT

As a lawyer, I found William Finnegan's article "Doubt" (A Reporter at Large, January 31st) extremely gratifying. Experienced lawyers are always telling clients to accept almost any reasonable settlement rather than go to trial, because trials are nothing more than educated guesses. Clients unfamiliar with the legal process usually presume that such advice is a sign of cynicism or laziness on the part of the lawyer, but the advice is accurate. Moreover, since the judicial system accepts such guesswork without much question, the rules of trials are often focussed more on the inherent fairness of what is being offered in evidence than on digging out the truth.

What bothers everyone in the judicial system about trials is that guesswork, no matter how earnest, has consequences that are usually permanent: a finding of guilt or the lack thereof, or an award of money damages or the denial of an award. In emphasiz-

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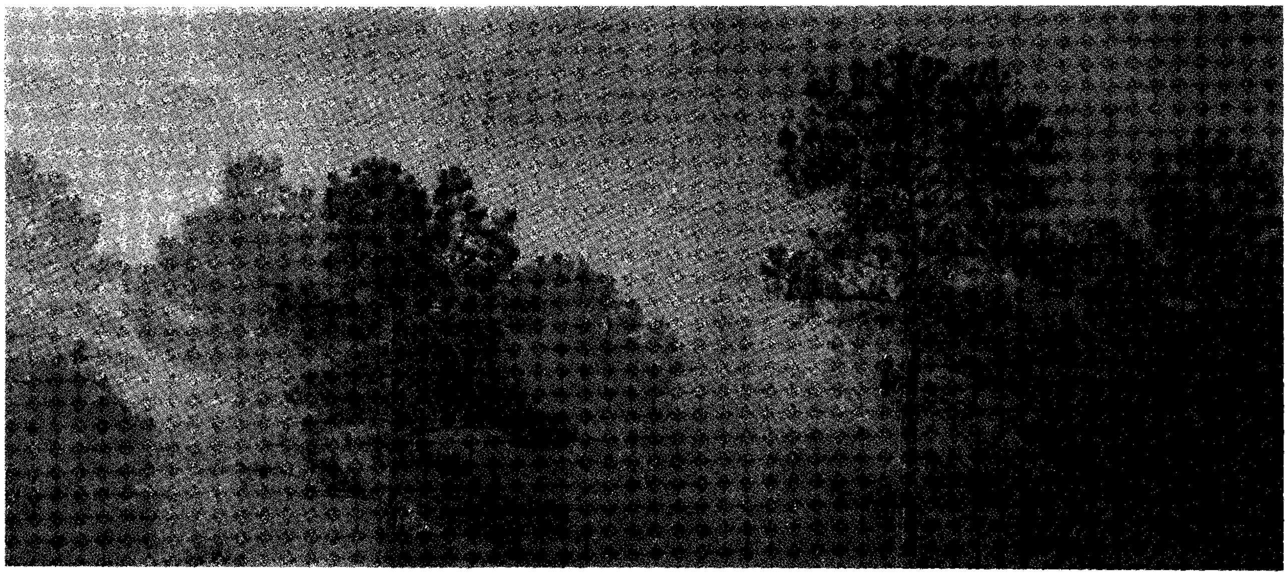


is with a plan we've developed to protect the Red Cockaded Woodpecker. We're finding nesting sites, then creating safe areas around them. Areas we'll leave undisturbed. Just to make sure the birds will always have a place to live and thrive. That makes me feel good about the work I do. And about the company I work for.” Carlton White, Forest Specialist. **Georgia-Pacific**

ing that the rules be fair, one hopes that no one will be wronged by an inaccurate result. But one is also making a concession to reality—a reality in which mistakes are made and the function of the court is in part merely to finish the case, not necessarily to vindicate anyone.

DAVID M. WALLMAN
Stamford, Conn.

I spent three weeks as a juror last year, and I wonder every day whether we gave the right verdict. I was frustrated throughout the trial, of a young black man for gun and drug possession, particularly because it was clear that—just as in the case Mr. Finnegan eloquently described—there was information we were not told: there were many times when we were escorted to the jury room while the judge and the lawyers whispered. The night before we were to start deliberating, I couldn't sleep and felt nauseated. Some of my fellow-jurors—all from disparate social and economic backgrounds—commented that they had felt the same way. We acquitted the defendant in just ten minutes, for we were convinced that the police had lied and set him up. After the trial, we were all happy, and many of us congratulated the defendant and wished him luck. Our happiness, though, was short-lived: the assistant district attorney followed us out into the hall and told us, rudely, "He was so guilty. We just couldn't present all the facts, which would have convinced you." I was so taken aback that I had another sleepless night. Since the trial, when I hear about a drive-by shooting or another child accidentally killed I sometimes wonder if it could be from a gun like the one our defendant was accused of possessing. Being a juror was a very upsetting experience for me: I was terrified that this man's life was in my hands. Now, although I'm happy he is not in prison, I am still plagued by doubt.

BARBARA A. CAMPAGNA
New York City

CAUGHT IN THE CRUSH

The January 31st cover of *The New Yorker*, by Edward Sorel, portrays the diverse population of New York City standing shoulder to shoulder in a crowded rush-hour subway car. Mr. Sorel uses different animals to represent New Yorkers' varied backgrounds, but only the central figure is readily identifiable in human terms: he is an Orthodox Jew. The figure is recognizable by his clothing, so it was most surprising to see a horn protuding from his head. The image of the "horned" Jew is a pernicious stereotype with an anti-Semitic history dating back to the Middle Ages. It was used to connect Jews with the Devil, inflaming anti-Semitic passions; this connection was made frequently in the Nazi journal *Der Stürmer*. We assume, of course, that the use of this stereotype by *The New Yorker* was an unintentional oversight in an attempt to illustrate the diversity of New Yorkers, and not a perpetuation of this anti-Semitic image.

RABBI LORI FORMAN
The American Jewish Committee
New York City

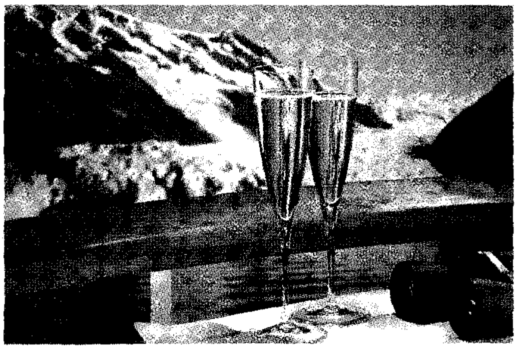
WINTER GAMES

Tom Hachtman's drawing "The Lost Michelangelo" (January 31st) reminded me of a reference to the same work of art in the final passage of Anthony Powell's autobiography, "To Keep the Ball Rolling":

> But if the consolation for life is art, what may the artist expect from life?
>
> An incident mentioned quite casually in Vasari's *Lives of the Most Excellent Italian Architects, Painters and Sculptors* always seems to me worth recalling. It teaches several lessons: that if you want something done get the best executant available to do it; that minor jobs are often worth taking on; that duration in time should not necessarily be the criterion in producing a work of art.
>
> Vasari says that on a winter day in Florence, when snow was deep on the ground, one of the Medici sent for Michelangelo to build a snowman in the courtyard of the Medici palace. Notwithstanding those (like Constant Lambert) who dislike the High Renaissance one can scarcely doubt that the finest snowman on record took shape.

CHARLES GETCHELL
Ipswich, Mass.

Letters should be as brief as possible, and sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number to "In the Mail," The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. They may be edited for length and clarity.



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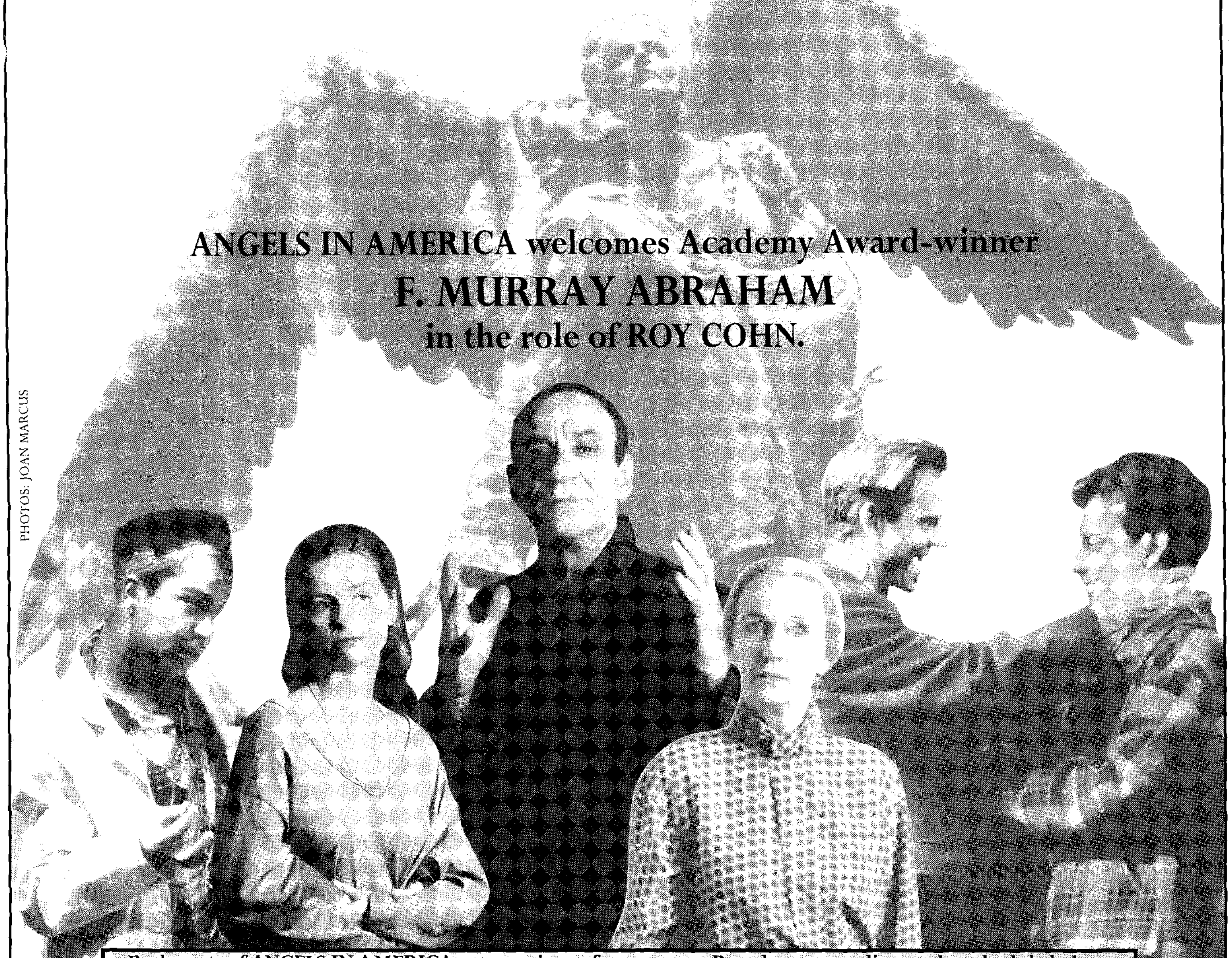
PART 1: MILLENNIUM APPROACHES

ANGELS IN AMERICA

PART 2: PERESTROIKA

BY **TONY KUSHNER** WITH SUSAN BRUCE, KATHLEEN CHALFANT, DAVID MARSHALL GRANT, JOE MANTELLO, ELLEN McLAUGHLIN, STEPHEN SPINELLA, JEFFREY WRIGHT, AND **F. MURRAY ABRAHAM** AS ROY COHN. DIRECTED BY **GEORGE C. WOLFE**


PHOTOS: JOAN MARCUS

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F. MURRAY ABRAHAM
in the role of ROY COHN.

Both parts of ANGELS IN AMERICA are now in performance on Broadway according to the schedule below. Tickets are now on sale through May 1.

TU	MAR 1 –	8:00	**MILL**	W	MAR 16	8:00	PER	F	APR 1 –	8:00	**MILL**	SA	APR 16	8:00	PER
W	MAR 2 –	2:00	**MILL**	TH	MAR 17 –	8:00	PER	SA	APR 2 –	2:00	**MILL**	SU	APR 17 –	3:00	PER
		8:00	PER	F	MAR 18 –	8:00	**MILL**			8:00	PER	TU	APR 19 –	8:00	**MILL**
TH	MAR 3 –	8:00	PER	SA	MAR 19 –	2:00	**MILL**	SU	APR 3 –	3:00	PER	W	APR 20 –	2:00	PER
F	MAR 4 –	8:00	**MILL**			8:00	PER	TU	APR 5 –	8:00	**MILL**			8:00	PER
SA	MAR 5 –	2:00	**MILL**	SU	MAR 20 –	3:00	PER	W	APR 6 –	2:00	PER	TH	APR 21 –	8:00	PER
		8:00	PER	TU	MAR 22 –	8:00	**MILL**			8:00	PER	F	APR 22 –	8:00	**MILL**
SU	MAR 6 –	3:00	PER	W	MAR 23 –	2:00	PER	TH	APR 7 –	8:00	PER	SA	APR 23 –	2:00	**MILL**
TU	MAR 8 –	8:00	**MILL**			8:00	PER	F	APR 8 –	8:00	**MILL**			8:00	PER
W	MAR 9 –	2:00	PER	TH	MAR 24 –	8:00	PER	SA	APR 9 –	2:00	**MILL**	SU	APR 24 –	3:00	PER
		8:00	PER	F	MAR 25 –	8:00	**MILL**			8:00	PER	TU	APR 26 –	8:00	**MILL**
TH	MAR 10 –	8:00	PER	SA	MAR 26 –	2:00	**MILL**	SU	APR 10 –	3:00	PER	W	APR 27 –	2:00	PER
F	MAR 11 –	8:00	**MILL**			8:00	PER	TU	APR 12 –	8:00	**MILL**			8:00	PER
SA	MAR 12 –	2:00	**MILL**	SU	MAR 27 –	3:00	PER	W	APR 13 –	2:00	PER	TH	APR 28 –	8:00	PER
		8:00	PER	TU	MAR 29 –	8:00	**MILL**			8:00	PER	F	APR 29 –	8:00	**MILL**
SU	MAR 13 –	3:00	PER	W	MAR 30 –	2:00	PER	TH	APR 14 –	8:00	PER	SA	APR 30 –	2:00	**MILL**
TU	MAR 15 –	8:00	**MILL**			8:00	PER	F	APR 15 –	8:00	**MILL**			8:00	PER
W	MAR 16 –	2:00	PER	TH	MAR 31 –	8:00	PER	SA	APR 16 –	2:00	**MILL**	SU	MAY 1 –	3:00	PER

MILL = MILLENNIUM APPROACHES

PER = PERESTROIKA

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WALTER KERR THEATRE, 219 WEST 48TH STREET

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

Albee's She

ACTRESSES have long had a friend in Edward Albee. Think of Martha and Honey in "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" and of Agnes and her daughter Julia in "A Delicate Balance." Julia was played on Broadway by Marian Seldes, who is currently in Albee's "Three Tall Women," at the Vineyard Theatre, as a character called B. The piece finds Mr. Albee posted somewhere between County Beckett and County Pinter, the action revolving around the attempts of a ninety-two-year-old character known as A (played with steely verve by Myra Carter) to look back on her life. Miss Seldes' performance has some of the inbred theatricality for which she has long been both cherished and criticized. (Several years ago, at a gathering of theatrical folk, it was pointed out that in the four-and-a-half-year Broadway run of "Deathtrap" Miss Seldes had never missed a performance, prompting some wag to mutter, "She's never given one, either.") As the middle-aged B, Miss Seldes is unable to accept the actions of her bisexual son, who pays a visit to A's sickbed, or to understand the older woman's ruminations. But by play's end, when A and B and C (the lovely young Jordan Baker) form a tableau that might be called "The Ages of Woman," Miss Seldes has achieved a touching, very unactress equilibrium.

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

ALLEGRO—A concert version of Rodgers and Hammerstein's 1947 musical, their third collaboration. With Stephen Bogardus, Donna Bullock, John Cunningham, Christine Ebersole, Jonathan Hadary, Celeste Holm, and Karen Ziémba. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. March 2-5 at 8.)

THE AMERICA PLAY—A play by Suzan-Lori Parks, with Gail Grate, Reggie Montgomery, and Michael Potts. In previews. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

THE ARABIAN NIGHTS—Jenny Bacon is Scheherazade in Mary Zimmerman's adaptation of the classic tales. In previews. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

AS YOU LIKE IT—This production of the Shakespearean comedy is presented by the Willow Cabin Theatre Company. Previews March 3-6. Opens March 7 at 7. (Judith Anderson, 422 W. 42nd St. 886-1889.)

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			2	3	4	5
6	7	8				

CAROUSEL—Michael Hayden is Billy Bigelow in this production of Rodgers and Hammerstein's 1945 musical, which comes to New York via London's Royal National Theatre. Nicholas Hytner directed. In previews. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

DAMN YANKEES—Victor Garber and Bebe Neuwirth star in the first Broadway revival of the 1955 musical by George Abbott and Douglass Wallop (book) and Richard Adler and Jerry Ross (score and lyrics). Two previews on March 2. Opens March 3 at 6:30. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

NEW YORK ROCK—Yoko Ono's new rock musical. Previews begin March 3. (WPA Theatre, 519 W. 23rd St. 206-0523.)

THE SACRIFICE OF MMBATHO (DAUGHTER OF NEBO)—Johannesburg's Market Theatre examines the differences between traditional and modern law in this music-theatre piece about a man who sacrifices his daughter. Conceived and directed by Hilary Blecher, with music by Victor N'toni and Rashid Lani. Opens March 2 at 7 and runs through March 13. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100.)

TITUS ANDRONICUS—Robert Stattel has the title role in Shakespeare's tragedy. This Theatre for a New Audience version was directed by Julie Taymor. Previews begin March 3. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 279-4200.)

OPENED RECENTLY

ALL IN THE TIMING—Six sparkling one-act comedies by David Ives. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

ANGELS IN AMERICA—"Perestroika," the second half of Tony Kushner's "Angels in America," is a masterpiece. Epic in scope, superbly acted, and directed with passionate restraint by George C. Wolfe, the play employs an original, impressionistic theatrical vocabulary to show us the heart of a new age. It runs in repertory with the first half, "Millennium Approaches." ("Perestroika" was reviewed in our issue of 12/13/93; "Millennium Approaches," 5/31/93.) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

THE AU PAIR MAN—Anglo-Irish relations go downhill in Hugh Leonard's highly predictable two-character study in class and obsession. Charlotte Moore and Ciarán O'Reilly do all they can, and there's an occasional wonderful joke, but the play isn't up to their efforts. (28th Street Theatre, 120 W. 28th St. 279-4200. Closes March 6.)

AVENUE X—An a-cappella musical, by John Jiler and Ray Leslee, about racial disharmony in a tough neighborhood in Brooklyn in the early sixties. Its chief pleasures are some lovely doo-wop harmonies and the sensational, roof-raising voice of Alvaleta Guess. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Closes March 13.)

THE BIRTHDAY PARTY—The Independent Theatre Company's production of this 1958 play by Harold Pinter summons up the unnerving mixture of brutality and banality that Pinter requires. The director, Dan Tedlie, has charted a clear path through the chaotic proceedings. The cast includes George Rex, Peter Brydges, and Barry Cassidy. (House of Candles Theatre, 99 Stanton St. 353-3088. Closes March 19.)

BLOWN SIDEWAYS THROUGH LIFE—In her sixty-fifth job, Claudia Shear charmingly and observantly tells us about her previous sixty-four, which have ranged from working in a hardware store to being a "phone girl" at a whorehouse, with a stint as a Bloomingdale's cosmetics salesgirl thrown in. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2285.)

A BODY OF WATER—In playwright Jenna Zark's New York début, a young Midwestern Jewish hairdresser, in marital and spiritual crisis, visits an Orthodox mikvah (or ritual bathhouse) and is counselled by a devout and apparently contented married woman whose belief in Jewish law leads to her own crisis. Zark has put theological matters to lively dramatic use. With Jodi Thelen, Stephanie Roth, and Bruce MacVittie. Caroline Kava directed. The play alternates with Regina Taylor's "Escape from Paradise." (Circle Repertory Company Theatre, 99 Seventh Ave. S. 924-7100. Closes March 12.)

CYRANO: THE MUSICAL—The nose have it. (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.)

ESCAPE FROM PARADISE—Regina Taylor wrote and performs in a one-woman show about a black magazine editor in her thirties who, one day, instead of going to work went to Italy. The AWOL editor enacts humorous, absurd, and occasionally haunting stories about everyone from her grandmother to her transvestite brother to the Italian man with whom she has a one-night stand. Taylor's chameleon-like changes from character to character are generally marvellous. Directed by Anne Bogart. The play alternates with Jenna Zark's "A Body of Water." (Circle Repertory Company Theatre, 99 Seventh Ave. S. 924-7100. Closes March 13.)

THE FAMILY BUSINESS—Dancer David Gordon and his son Ain in a play they wrote and directed, which also stars Valda Setterfield (David's wife and Ain's mother). (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Closes March 6.)

FAMILY SECRETS—Sherry Glaser is the sole, physically adept, very funny performer in this comedy about a Jewish family, which she wrote with Greg Howells. (Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

FOUR DOGS AND A BONE—The "bone" of John Patrick Shanley's satiric comedy is a movie, and the "four dogs" are its producer, writer, and two actresses, who together make the funniest foursome in town. (11/15/93) (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 924-8782.)

HELLO AGAIN—Suggested by Arthur Schnitzler's play "La Ronde," Michael John LaChiusa's new musical travels through various American decades to tell a bittersweet story of hetero- and homosexual seductions and betrayals. LaChiusa is lucky to have director and choreographer Graciela Daniele: her streamlined and sexy stage pictures make the music seem better than it is. Of the excellent cast of ten, Judy Blazer and John Cameron Mitchell are especially effective. (2/21/94) (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Innocent Eréndira—An English-language adaptation of Gabriel García Márquez's novella, starring Miriam Colón. A joint production of Repertorio Español and the Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre. (Gramercy Arts Theatre, 138 E. 27th St. 889-2850. Closes March 20.)

Jean Cocteau Repertory—Performances of Shaw's "Heartbreak House" alternate with David Fishelson's dramatization of Dostoyevski's "The Brothers Karamazov." (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060.)

Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat—Like a kaleidoscope, Andrew Lloyd Webber's flippant new mega-version of his first musical is bright, ever-changing, and utterly meaningless. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

Kiss of the Spider Woman—A musical, based on the novel by Manuel Puig, with a distinguished book by Terrence McNally and a star performance by the redoubtable Chita Rivera in the title role. Harold Prince was the director. The songs are by John Kander and Fred Ebb. (5/24/93) (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Laughter on the 23rd Floor—Neil Simon's twenty-seventh Broadway play, about a group of writers for a fictionalized version of "Your Show of Shows," is one of his finest comic efforts. The subject allows Simon to do what he does best: tell jokes about the making of laughs. Directed by Jerry Zaks, with Mark Linn-Baker, Lewis J. Stadlen, Nathan Lane, Ron Orbach, John Slattery, and J. K. Simmons. (12/20/93) (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

Little Eyolf—Ibsen's themes seem a bit shopworn in this late play, but there are some deeply moving scenes in which an estranged husband and wife deal with the death of their child. The cast is very fine, particularly Robin Leslie Brown as the aunt and Mark Kenneth Smaltz as the father. Joanne Camp is the mother. Solidly directed by Shepard Sobel. (Pearl, 125 W. 22nd St. 645-7708. Closes March 19.)

Living in Flames—A one-man show by Todd Alcott. Directed by Lee Costello. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 967-7079.)

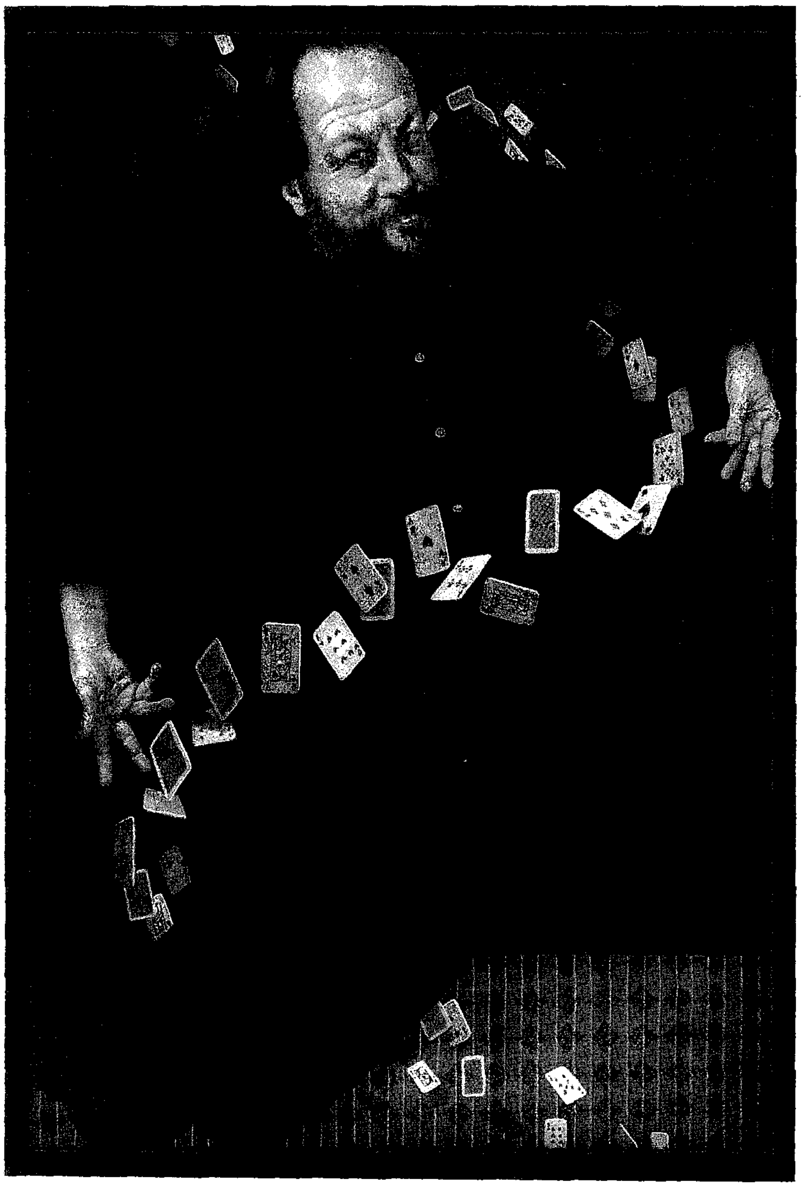
Manhattan Class Company—A one-act-play festival featuring Peter Hedges' "Good as New," Allan Heinberg's "The Amazon's Voice," Robert Shaffron's "Endless Air, Endless Water," and Annie Evans' "I Can't Stop Thinking Today" (with Allison Janney). (120 W. 28th St. 727-7765. Closes March 12.)

The Mayor of Boys Town—A one-man play about the Nebraska institution, written and performed by Barnaby Spring. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 840-3074.)

My Fair Lady—Howard Davies' genial new production of the Lerner and Loewe musical. Richard Chamberlain is all charm and suave good looks as Professor Henry Higgins, and Melissa Errico lends a fine voice and an attractive presence to the role of Eliza. With excellent support from Paxton Whitehead, Dolores Sutton, and Julian Holloway. (1/17/94) (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200.)

My Head Was a Sledgehammer—Richard Foreman's new play, performed by his Ontological-Hysteric Theatre. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. For reservations, call 533-4650.)

No Man's Land—Christopher Plummer and Jason Robards star in Harold Pinter's 1975 play. (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400. Closes March 20.)



Ricky Jay with his fifty-two assistants.

C.F. PAYNE

Old New York: False Dawn—The New York Art Theatre Institute's charming version of the first chapter of Edith Wharton's novella "Old New York." (Old Merchant's House Museum, 29 E. 4th St. 226-6211.)

Pounding Nails in the Floor with My Forehead—The latest solo show by the boss of monologuists, Eric Bogosian, is basically a continuation of his 1990 "Sex, Drugs, Rock & Roll": portraits of a dozen alarming characters—the manic, the depressive, the deluded, and the deranged—who have squatters' rights in Bogosian's mind. (2/21/94) (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 307-4100.)

Ricky Jay & His 52 Assistants—With a Mephistophelean smoothness, the master sleight-of-hand artist discourses on the history of trickery and performs illusions that will amaze even those who wouldn't normally go out of their way to see card tricks. Under the direction of David Mamet, who is right at home in the slightly sinister man's world of magic, Mr. Jay makes willing and delighted fools of his audience. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200.)

Sand—Three one-acts by Edward Albee. The first two plays, "Box" and "The Sandbox," are short, interesting meditations on great themes: life and death, art, and the decay of civilization. The third is the New York première of "Finding the Sun" (1983): an extended family spends a day on the beach and delivers a lot of great lines. Directed by Mr. Albee. (Kampo Cultural Center, 31 Bond St. 279-4200. Closes March 6.)

She Loves Me—The Roundabout's production of the 1963 Bock-Harnick-Masteroff musical. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100.)

Stomp—A group of eight British rhythm specialists who use unconventional percussion instruments. (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477.)

Three Birds Alighting on a Field—Timberlake Wertenbaker's satire of the London art world of the eighties, an import from London's Royal Court, has a rather heavy hand when it comes to parcelling out blame for the degradation of English values, but Max Stafford-Clark's direction has elicited good performances from Harriet Walter, Zach Grenier, and Daniel Gerroll. (2/21/94) (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

Three Tall Women—A 1991 play by Edward Albee, with Jordan Baker, Myra Carter, and Marian Seldes. Directed by Lawrence Sacharow. (Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3874. Closes March 13.)

Unfinished Stories—A play by Sybille Pearson, with Christopher Collet, E. Katherine Kerr, Laurence Luckinbill, and Joseph Wiseman. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 302-6989. Closes March 13.)

LONG RUNS

BEAU JEST: Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780. . . . **BLOOD BROTHERS:** Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CRAZY FOR YOU:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **FOREVER PLAID:** Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400. . . . **GUYS AND DOLLS:** Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **NUNSENSE:** Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE SISTERS ROSENSWEIG:** Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200. . . . **THE WHO'S TOMMY:** St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

Ice Show—"Discover Card Stars on Ice" features Kristi Yamaguchi, Scott Hamilton, and Paul Wylie, and includes a tribute to Sarajevo. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. March 5 at 8.)

Linda Mancini—In her new performance piece, "Tip or Die." (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. March 3-6 at 7:30. Through March 20.)

Theodora Skipitares—Presenting "Under the Knife," which incorporates puppets, film, live music, live actors, and video. (La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. March 3-5 at 7:30 and March 6 at 3 and 7:30. Through March 13.)

Toy Theatre Festival—Eight contemporary works, most of them puppet related, created for very small stages. Also on view is an exhibit of toy theatres. (Theatre for the New City, 155 First Ave., at 9th St. 254-1109. March 3-5 at 7:30 and March 6 at 3. Through March 13.)

DANCE

Merce Cunningham Dance Company—The opening performance of a two-week engagment: "CRWDSPCR" (New York première) and "Enter." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. March 8 at 7:30. Through March 20.)

White Oak Dance Project—Mikhail Baryshnikov and Mark Morris's company, in its New York début. March 2 and March 5 at 8: "Pergolesi," "Signals," and "Mosaic and United." . . . ¶ March 3-4 at 8 and March 6 at 2: "Jocose," "Work in Progress," "Behind White Lilies" (première) and "Quartet for IV (and sometimes, one, two, or three. . .)" (New York première). (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

Feld Ballets/NY—March 2 at 8: "Common Ground," "Doghead & Godcatchers" (première), and "Skara Brae." . . . ¶ March 3 at 8: "Aurora I," "Doo Dah Day," and "The Jig Is Up." . . . ¶ March 4 at 8: "La Vida," "Kore," "Savage Glance," and "Doghead & Godcatchers." . . . ¶ March 5 at 2: A program titled "Kids Dance," in which students of the New Ballet School perform "Hello Fancy," "23 Skidoo," "The Envelope," and "Half Time." . . . ¶ March 5 at 8: "Aurora I," "Clave," "Evoe," and "Doghead & Godcatchers." . . . ¶ March 6 at 2: "La Vida," "Kore," "Doo Dah Day," and "The Jig Is Up." . . . ¶ March 6 at 7:30: "Ion," "Evoe," "Savage Glance," and "Doghead & Godcatchers." . . . ¶ March 8 at 8: "Contra Pose," "Doghead & Godcatchers," and "Doo Dah Day." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Through March 20.)

Centre National de Danse Contemporaine d'Angers/L'Esquisse—Featuring Joelle Bouvier and Regis Obadia, a modern-dance duo from France, in the New York première of "Welcome to Paradise." (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6160. March 2-3 at 8.)

"Necessary Weather"—The American première of a collaborative project by Dana Reitz, Sara Rudner, and Jennifer Tipton. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793. March 3-6 at 8. Through March 13.)

Dances . . . Patrelle—In "Anyone Can . . . !" (première), "Beloved/Memories," and "Black & Blue . . . and Bartók." With guest artists Judith Fugate and Medhi Bahiri. (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. March 4-5 at 8, and March 6 at 7. Through March 13.)

Janet Lilly and Valerie Adefokun—In an evening of varied works ranging "from the serious to the silly." (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. March 4-6 at 8:30.)

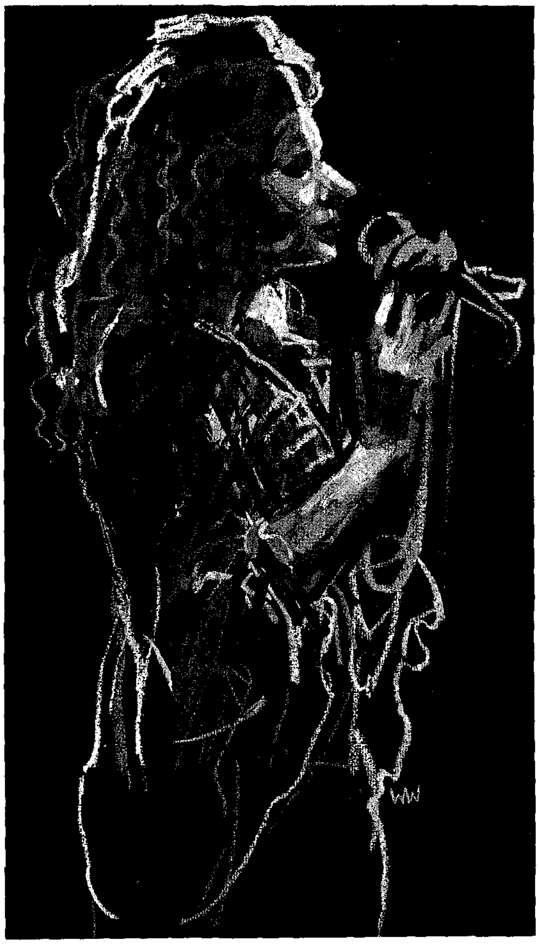
Ballet British Columbia—The Canadian company in its New York début, offering two programs of premières. (Walt Whitman Hall, Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts, Brooklyn College. 1-718 951-4500. March 5 at 8 and March 6 at 2.)

NIGHT LIFE

New Habits

The Cowboy Junkies have released four albums in the past five years, an enterprising performance for a band whose 1989 breakthrough record, "The Trinity Session," sounded as if it were made by shy, depressive Canadian hippies who could barely get out of bed in the morning. On their fine new album, "Pale Sun, Crescent Moon," the band seems to have discovered caffeine and the electric guitar. The hushed, meditative plaint of Margo Timmins' singing and the diaristic intricacies of her brother Michael's lyrics still predominate—another brother, Peter, plays drums, and Alan Anton is on bass—but the Junkies have added a fifth, unofficial member: a terrific guitarist named Ken Myhr, whose contributions seem to have spooked the band into a feisty, extroverted mode. On the sunny "Anniversary Song," Margo celebrates love and happiness with full-throated abandon while Myhr's wa-wa guitar floats behind her like a Jerry Garcia smile.

Myhr will be onstage when the Cowboy Junkies play two sets at the Supper Club on March 2, and he'll presumably crank it up for "The Post," a song by J. Mascis, of Dinosaur Jr., that's about as close to grunge as the Junkies have ever come. Still, there's unlikely to be an outbreak of moshing; Michael Timmins, whose understated guitar work has its own kind of intensity, prefers to perform sitting down, and the band's fast songs are still slower than a lot of other bands' slow songs. Glimmers of fierceness and joy aside, the Junkies know that gloom and quiet can be sex and drugs and rock and roll, too.



The Cowboy Junkies at the Supper Club.

WENDY WILSON

CONCERTS

Bryan Adams—Adams is among several eighties pop stars who have lately been reaping the benefits of instant nostalgia. Ten years back, the Vancouver singer was a mainstream rocker from central casting who wrote catchy songs with easy-to-remember titles ("Cuts Like a Knife," "Straight from the Heart"). His current incarnation—on the pop-singles chart, at least—is that of a sappy crooner of banal ballads and movie "love themes." Still, Adams' voice remains in fine, raspy form, and live shows are the best place to appreciate his raw energy and crowd-pleasing charisma. The Crash Test Dummies will open. The Dummies offer mostly earnest, even corny pop songs, but their front man sings them as if he's channelling Iggy Pop's wickedly wry bass through his gut. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. March 6 at 7:30.)

Rush—Two years ago, when *Spin* published a brief but heartfelt piece called "Confessions of a Rush Fan," it became the first alternative-music publication to offer a revisionist appreciation of this much-maligned Canadian trio. *Spin* was probably too generous. Rush has certainly carved out an honorable niche: the band has released nineteen albums in twenty years and influenced hordes of younger, edgier musicians (including Primus, who toured with Rush in 1992). But Geddy Lee's insectile screech may be the most abrasive voice in rock history. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. March 8-9 at 8.)

Ann Hampton Callaway—Winter Garden, World Financial Center, Battery Park City. March 2 at 6:30. No tickets necessary.

Carol Lawrence—Singing excerpts from musicals by Leonard Bernstein, including "Fancy Free," "On the Town," "Wonderful Town," "West Side Story," and "Candide," and reminiscing about Lenny. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. March 2 at 7.)

Joe Satriani—Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. March 2 at 8.

Bern Nix Trio—Alternative Museum, 594 Broadway. 966-4444. March 2 at 8.

Sting—With Vinx, March 2-3 and March 5 at 8. . . . ¶ With the Palladinos, March 6 at 8. (Paramount, Madison Square Garden. 465-6000.)

"New Sounds Live"—Guy Klucevsek's Ain't Nothin' but a Polka Band, the Kips Bay Ceili Band, and Your Neighborhood Sax Quartet (playing the music of Sun Ra). (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. March 3 at 8.)

Walter Blanding, Jr., Quartet—New School Auditorium, 66 W. 12th St. March 4 at 6. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.

"Swing Out: An American Golden Age"—A concert saluting music of the thirties, featuring trumpeter Dick Sudhalter and an eleven-member ensemble with singer Barbara Lea. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. March 4 at 8.)

Hamza El Din—Playing music of Nubia. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. March 4 at 8.)

The Story—Prospect Park Picnic House, Prospect Park W. at Third St., Brooklyn. March 6 at 3. Tickets at the door on the day of the concert.

ROCK AND FOLK

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—This week, the club continues its twentieth-anniversary celebration, which will run through early April. **LUKA BLOOM** drops by on March 3-4. Folk-rocker Bloom has two albums to his credit so far, both of them lyrical, atmospheric gems; his third, due late in May, may make him a star. In the meantime, it's well worth your while to experience the singer-songwriter's hearty, brogue-inflected vocals and feverish "electro-acoustic" guitar playing live. On March 5: the great **NRBQ** plugs its excellent new album "Message for the Mess Age." **DAVID WILCOX** provides yet another evening of acoustic pop on March 7.

Café Sin-é, 122 St. Marks Pl. (982-0370)—A small peach-walled storefront, Sin-é is usually given over to a young, earthy crowd that drinks Rolling Rock or espresso and waits for some Irish musician or other to blow in and play a set.

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—Rock and roll always sounds best in a dump, which may be why this legendary club is still thriving: the management has had the good sense not to renovate. In recent years, CB's has become something of an empire; the club is now flanked by a pizzeria/boutique on one side and a bar/performance space on the other—all your shopping needs taken care of in one convenient location. On March 4, Hoboken's **TINY LIGHTS** showcases its breezy, AM-radio-influenced hodgepodge of rock, folk, jazz, blues, and R. & B. at CB's gallery. The band's new album, "Milky Juicy," is a delight, but their freewheeling virtuosity is best captured live.

Grand, 76 E. 13th St. (777-0600)—A serious room for serious rock-and-rolling, with a wall-o'-speakers up front and an ear-decompression lounge around the bar in the back. The **VELDT** is here on March 5. This fledgling foursome is the latest pop act to create a buzz by fusing elements of funk and modern rock. The concept itself is hardly novel, but the Veldt invests its hybrid with a soulful ambience that transcends gimmickry. On the group's début album, "Afrodisiac," the songs aren't as solid as the playing, but there's plenty of promise here. **WIDOWMAKER** arrives on March 9.

Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—This sprawling two-floor establishment has been all things to all people: meeting hall, rock club, jazz club, Off Broadway theatre. **AHMET & DWEEZIL ZAPPA** arrive on March 4. It's a sad coincidence that this gig follows so closely on Frank Zappa's death. The iconoclastic rock wizard's sons recorded a début album with their own band, called Z, before their father succumbed to cancer in January; this performance will showcase Z's new songs and revive a few of Dad's twisted classics. On the just-released "Shampoohorn," nineteen-year-old singer Ahmet and his big brother Dweezil—a guitarist who has already put out three solo albums (and whose mug may be familiar to MTV fans, from his brief stint as a v.j. a few years back)—fit weird, wacky, and socially conscious lyrics into ambitiously intricate arrangements. One song, about compulsive lying, is titled "Did I Mention It Was Huge." Somewhere, surely, Frank is smiling. . . . ¶ The Swing Dance Society gathers here every Sunday night, at the Continental Club. The dancers all share a passion for the Lindy Hop, a dance that involves a lot of whirling and the occasional display of underwear. Sets from eight until midnight. For information on the society, call 696-9737.

Limelight, Sixth Ave. at 20th St. (807-7850)—A church turned eighties hot spot, this unholy venue currently plays host to a variety of techno and alternative acts. **THEATRE OF HATE** entertains on March 8.

Manny's Car Wash, 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—The Upper East Side Blues. What's being billed as the "Ultimate Allman Brothers Tribute" goes down on March 2. **ROOMFUL OF BLUES** is here on March 3.

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—Many of the bands that play here today will be playing somewhere more expensive tomorrow. **THINKING FELLERS UNION LOCAL #282** appears on March 4. The **SPINANES** roll in on March 6, with Red, Red Meat. The Spinanes are an alternative-rock band with an ethereal-voiced female lead singer, and critics love them.

Paddy Reilly's Music Bar, 495 Second Ave., at 28th St. (686-1210)—This Irish outpost has become known as the birthplace of the roots-and-rebellion rock band Black 47, which acknowledged its paternity by putting a picture of the joint on the cover of its latest record, "Fire of Freedom." Prepare for a packed room, flowing Guinness, and an Irish-hootenanny atmosphere. **BLACK 47** usually plays on Wednesdays and Saturdays, and Speir Mor (Gaelic for Big Sky) performs for a hearty following on Fridays. Séisiún—a traditional Irish jam—is on Thursday nights. When there's no live music, the jukebox blasts everything from the Chieftains to Greg Trooper to Paddy Reilly, the Irish folksinger who owns the place.

Rodeo Bar, 375 Third Ave., at 27th St. (683-6500)—A Western theme bar, attached to a Southwestern restaurant. The walls simulate a log cabin, a buffalo head blows smoke through its nostrils, there's a horse trailer that's been converted into a bar, and you get peanuts for eating and, occasionally, throwing. But wait, there's more: video rodeos, New Mexico memorabilia, and live music nightly—country, blues, folk, rock, hillbilly.

Supper Club, 240 W. 47th St. (921-1940)—The **COWBOY JUNKIES** are here on March 2.

Tramps, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—A broad, spacious, and agreeable club, near what was once called Ladies' Mile but might now be termed the pool-hall district. Arthur Lee's **LOVE** performs on March 4. **URBAN BLIGHT** appears on March 5.

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—A warehouse complex for neo-hippies and other party animals. **ADAM ROTH & THE BLUE DEVILS** play on March 2, with Maul Girls and Distant Cousins. Roth used to play with the Del Fuegos, and he's also been heard on the rock-parody projects of comedian Denis Leary, his buddy from Emerson College. With his current band, Roth offers gritty, bluesy rock—and plenty of wry humor between songs. On March 4, **COLONEL BRUCE HAMPTON AND THE AQUARIUM RESCUE UNIT** get jam-happy, with Left Over Salmon. **SICK OF IT ALL** appears on March 6.

JAZZ AND BLUES

A.K.A, 77 W. Houston St., at Wooster St. (673-7325)—Jazz, hip-hop, and world beat meet in this small, velvet-draped club. There's a long, elegant bar with enough seats to accommodate the few non-dancers; it can be a tight squeeze, but it's a svelte crowd.

Birdland, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—This northern restaurant-bar, an airy two-tiered space with pastel walls and potted greenery, is a shade too slick for Columbia students but just right for post-collegiate jazz fans. The name is taken from the long-gone midtown pleasure dome that featured Bird himself. **PETE SIMS** drops by on March 4-5. Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Jazz, mirrors, and a gift shop. Singer **DIANE SCHUUR** is here through March 6. Starting March 8: **TITO PUENTE'S GOLDEN LATIN JAZZ ALL-STARS.** Dining.

The Cooler, 416 W. 14th St. (229-0785)—An authentic old locker deep in the heart of the meat district has been converted into a comfortable, banquette-lined paradise. Thursday nights belong to **GIANT STEP,** a roving collective of musicians, rappers, and d.j.s who mix jazz, funk, and hip-hop. **MEDESKI, MARTIN & WOOD** play on March 4-5.

Down Beat, 101 Seventh Ave. S. (620-4000)—A long, warm, wood-panelled room with upholstered banquettes, a nicely appointed bar, and a reliable roster of jazz names. Murals of Diz, Bird, and Basie adorn the walls, so the players are always in good company. **RUTH BROWN** begins an engagement on March 8. Taking her cues from gospel and swing, Brown developed a lithe, intuitive style of R. & B. singing that has grown richer and more authoritative over the years. The definitive collection of her work, a forty-track anthology released in 1989, is called "Miss Rhythm," an honorific title she deserves.

Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7900)—The seating arrangement in this long, narrow, red-velvet-and-mirror-walled basement makes flying coach seem roomy; nevertheless, it's one of the city's top jazz spots—thanks largely to the club's talent bookers. But watch your head. The **NEW YORK SWING QUARTET** continues through March 6. Beginning March 8: the **BENNY GOLSON** quartet. Boasting a brawny tone, full-throttle energy, and impeccable credentials, tenor saxophonist Golson is a genuine hard-bop hero. He's also one of the greatest of all jazz composers, with at least three classics to his name: "I Remember Clifford," "Whisper Not," and "Stablemates." On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL** leads a trio. Dining.

Fez, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—A comfortable neo-Moroccan bar and lounge, hidden inside the Time Café, with satin couches and mosaic tables. The downstairs room, where bands perform, is rather plain in comparison, but still a sleek and comfortable spot to take in a show. On March 2: **BLOOD ORANGES.** The Oranges are based in Boston, but you'd never know it from the tangy authority they lend to their modern country songs. On their excellent new album, "The Crying Tree," they veer effortlessly from spirited bluegrass to zany punkabilly, and offer some lovely, rootsy ballads to boot. Sweet-voiced folksinger **KATE JACOBS** opens. The **MINGUS BIG BAND** packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

Five Spot, 4 W. 31st St. (631-0100)—Set in a mammoth turn-of-the-century ballroom, this jazz club is all marble and gilt, with a few modern touches, such as the zebra-patterned carpeting in the V.I.P. room upstairs. Dining.

Knitting Factory, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—This club, run by a

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RECORD STORE ARRIVALS

A highly selective list of new releases we've been waiting to hear.

"RHYTHM, COUNTRY & BLUES" (MCA).

NRBQ, "Message for the Mess Age" (Rhino/Forward).

BRUCE COCKBURN, "Dart to the Heart" (Columbia).

BLOOD ORANGES, "The Crying Tree" (East Side Digital).

THE VELDT, "Afrodisiac" (Mercury).

DIANNE REEVES, "Art and Survival" (EMI).

THE FIREMAN, "Strawberries, Oceans, Ships, Forest" (Capitol).

ETTA JAMES, "Mystery Lady" (Private).

NINE INCH NAILS, "The Downward Spiral" (Interscope).

CAROLE KING, "In Concert" (Rhythm Safari/Priority).

JOHN TRUDELL, "Johnny Damas and Me" (Rykodisc).

NIGHT LIFE–Cont'd

couple of forward-looking Wisconsinites, specializes in all manner of neo-this and post-that ensembles. The atmosphere is low-key, low-budget bohemian.

La Cave on First, 1125 First Ave., at 62nd St. (759-4011)—On March 7, show-biz gadabout STARLA SMITH celebrates her birthday with two sets here. The show's age-appropriate theme is "Hot Flashes," and her mighty contralto, devoted to standards, promises to sizzle. The Stan Free trio provides backup. Dining.

Red Blazer Too, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—Tuesdays belong to Jim Lawyer and his Bluebird Society Orchestra; Thursdays to Stan Rubin's big band; Fridays to Lew Anderson's big band and Sam Ulano and his Bourbon Street Swingers; and Saturdays to Bob Cantwell and his Stompers.

Sounds of Brazil, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A great grass hut with a fruit-and-bamboo motif, dedicated to calypso, reggae, and bossa nova. VINX arrives on March 3. Vinx's most recent album, "The Storyteller" (1993), is even quirkier and more eclectic than its predecessors, setting the singer-percussionist's mellifluous baritone against a lush backdrop that incorporates elements of jazz, salsa, and flamenco. Closed Sundays. Dining.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—A jazz outpost where the musicians are always top-shelf. The JOHN ABERCROMBIE trio is in through March 6. Working with an organ trio over the last few years has toughened up Abercrombie's guitar playing. The lyricism that characterized his ECM heyday is still in place; his wispiness, however, has been replaced by bluesy muscle. Dining.

Tavern on the Green, Central Park W. at 67th St. (873-3200)—This legendary tourist haven makes serious jazz fans welcome in the Chestnut Room. It resembles a hunting lodge and is every bit as over the top as the rest of the establishment, but the bookings are impressive. MARIAN MC PARTLAND is here all week. As jazz institutions go, McPartland is pretty frisky. Her piano work is as elegant as ever, but McPartland's continuing vigor and ever-expanding repertoire mark a distinct, if quiet, resurgence. Taking her lead from Bill Evans, McPartland has developed an ear for integrating bass and drums brilliantly within her own democratic trios.

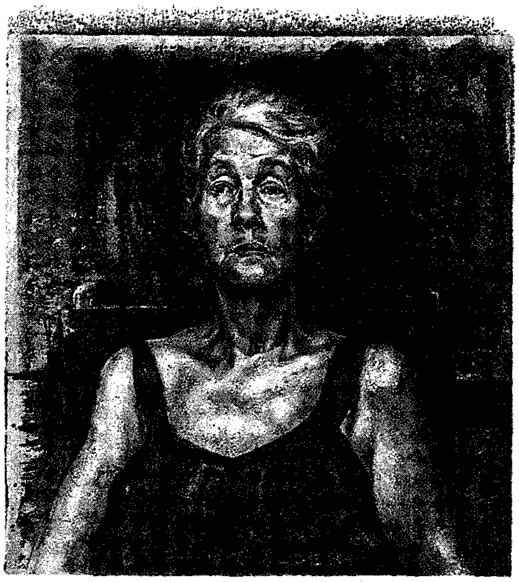
Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The world's most famous jazz club is also the last place in town that still looks, feels, and smells like a classic jazz club—subterranean, smoky, and thick with the spirits of past masters. The DON BYRON quintet is in through March 6. The clarinettist has been drawing attention lately with his Mickey Katz klezmer project, but his band for this engagement will concentrate on Byron's own far-ranging take on contemporary jazz. The VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA holds sway on Mondays.

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—One of those snazzy eateries you've seen nestled amid brownstones in the Village and wondered about. The food is Italian, the atmosphere is pastels and soft lights, and the musicians, who set up in a room between the bar and the dining room, are first-rate. PETE MALINVERNI and RALPH LALAMA continue through March 5.

STANDARDS AND CABARET

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—This week, STEVE ROSS and JEANNE LEHMAN continue their monthlong engagement in the Oak Room. Dining.

Ballroom, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A cool green music hall that features a steady stream of international pop and cabaret stars, as well as the occasional drag queen. The Ballroom is also a tapas restaurant—if you haven't had dinner, you may never make it to the show. BETTY is here this week.



Alice Neel.

KELYNN Z. ALDER

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—EARTHA KITT continues through March 12. Now in her sixties, Kitt is still a fierce and funny performer with a feral grip on her audience. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, RONNY WHYTE presides at the piano.

Duplex, 61 Christopher St., at Seventh Ave. (255-5438)—A two-floor entertainment center. The cheery white downstairs bar has French windows giving onto the bustle of Seventh Avenue, but the real clamor is indoors. Everyone is a star here—the pianist, the bartender, the waiters, and the audience. Pop standards are sung/shouted, usually with altered, risqué lyrics; wisecracks are fired across the room; and everyone laughs too hard. Upstairs, there's a quieter bar and a cabaret, where you'll find a variety of performers nightly.

Michael's Pub, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—A midtown restaurant and jazz lair for the tasselled-loafers set. The dark, sombre bar (carved-wood lions, iron grillwork) looks like a place you'd find in London's financial district; the dining room (putting-green green carpet, lime-green leather banquettes) has more of a country-club feel. KARRIN ALLYSON is in through March 5. A young singer from Kansas City, Allyson lends a light, graceful touch to elegant pop and jazz standards. This engagement marks her New York début. Woody Allen continues his night job as clarinet player in the NEW ORLEANS FUNERAL AND RAGTIME ORCHESTRA, a Dixieland-jazz ensemble now in its twentieth year. VERNEL BAGNERIS begins an open-ended run on March 8. Closed Sundays.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—A plush, old-fashioned night club, sixty-five floors above it all, complete with Art Deco fixtures, intimate glitter, and a panoramic view as dizzying as the tab. SUSANNAH MC CORKLE, here through March 26, should feel at home in this upscale aerie; both she and the club know how to be sophisticated without making a big deal about it. Literate and well informed on the history of her art, McCorkle will take her audience on a jazz-inflected stroll through the last seventy years of American popular song, stopping along the way to breathe in the rarefied atmosphere of Porter, Mercer, Arlen, and the others. Her fellow-travellers: pianist Allen Farnham, bassist Chip Jackson, and drummer Warren Odze.

Russian Tea Room, 150 W. 57th St. (265-0947)—Upstairs, there's a small red, gold, and green cabaret. JOYCE BREACH and RICHARD RODNEY BENNETT perform on March 6, followed by FRANCESCA BLUMENTHAL and CLAIBORNE CARY on March 7. Dining.

ART

Down and Out

By the time Alice Neel (1900-1984) settled in Spanish Harlem in 1938, she had already lived a romantic yet painful life. In her early twenties, she had married a Cuban artist, and they lived in Cuba for several years. They had two daughters; the older died in 1927, before her first birthday. In 1930, after the couple had returned to New York, Neel's husband left her and took their younger daughter back to Cuba. That same year, she was hospitalized for depression, and later attempted suicide. Anyone else might, with good reason, have given up at this point and returned to the provinces—Pennsylvania, in Neel's case—but Neel emerged from the maelstrom of her personal life a mature artist.

"The Years in Spanish Harlem 1938-1961," the excellent Neel show at Robert Miller (41 E. 57th Street; through March 19), sounds like the title of a song or a novel. Neel's strongest affinities tended to be with artists who had an Expressionist streak, perhaps in keeping with her own tempestuous life. One can see echoes of the Mannerist elongations of El Greco, blue-period Picasso, Soutine, Kokoschka, and Schiele. In one small, weird picture, "Mr. Greene's Hands" (1946), the hands in question, painted a thick ochre/green, are folded over one another and virtually fibrillating with inner torment. Neel manages to endow the hands with more psychological depth than one finds in most portraits. And while Neel remains chary of sentimentality, she had for her often melancholy subjects a natural empathy; she was one of them.

MUSEUMS

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"The Decorative Arts of Frank Lloyd Wright." Furniture, ceramics, textiles, sculpture, architectural fragments, photographs, stained glass, metalwork, and drawings. There are concurrent shows of Wright works at the Museum of Modern Art and the Guggenheim Museum. . . . ¶ "Degas Landscapes." Seventy-five paintings, pastels, and monotypes, many of them on view for the first time since a solo Degas show in 1892. The oil on paper "Italian Landscape" (1857-1858) displays the astonishing pictorial shorthand that flowered in his mature paintings, but the most striking works are the color monotypes, most of which the artist executed in a single concentrated period between 1890 and 1892. Many of them seem not to belong to the nineteenth century. Through April 3. . . . ¶ "The Hero Twins of Ancient Maya Myth: Rollout Photographs by Justin Kerr." Photographs of ceramic vessels from the fourth century to the eighth. . . . ¶ Paintings and drawings from the late eighteenth century to the early twentieth by Caspar David Friedrich and Ferdinand Hodler, among others. . . . ¶ "The

Golden Age of Danish Painting," a show ranging from the late eighteenth century through the mid-nineteenth. . . . ¶ "Illustrated Poetry and Epic Images: Persian Painting of the 1330s and 1340s." . . . ¶ An exhibition of sixteenth-century Italian drawings by Caravaggio, Fra Bartolommeo, Bronzino, and many others. Through March 27. . . . ¶ "Recent Work," a mini-retrospective of more than fifty portraits by Lucian Freud. Through March 13. . . . ¶ The New Costume Institute celebrates the five-decade career of Diana Vreeland. Through March 20. . . . ¶ "The Gold of Meroe" features the jewelry of Queen Amanishakheto of Meroe, an ancient Nubian ruler. Through April 3. . . . ¶ "Elephant: The Animal and Its Ivory in African Art" includes seventy objects, from elephant masks to intricately carved tusks, representing more than twenty different indigenous cultures. . . . ¶ "Immortals and Sages: Fusuma Paintings from Ryoan-ji and the Lore of China in Japanese Art." (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—"Frank Lloyd Wright: Architect." A retrospective, beginning with material from the eighteen-eighties, that includes some three hundred and fifty drawings, thirty scale models, six full-scale wall constructions, more than a hundred photographs, and architectural fragments. There are concurrent shows of Wright works at the Metropolitan Museum and the Guggenheim Museum. . . . ¶ A section of a sixty-foot-diameter dome by Chuck Hoberman, which opens and closes in a fluid motion reminiscent of the expansion and contraction of the iris. . . . ¶ "Three Masters of the Bauhaus: Lyonel Feininger, Wassily Kandinsky, and Paul Klee" comprises roughly seventy-five prints and illustrated books from the museum's collection. . . . ¶ Twenty-five years of Brooke Alexander Editions, which publishes prints and multiples of contemporary artists, including Richard Artschwager and Lorna Simpson. . . . ¶ "Designed for Speed: Three Automobiles by Ferrari." MOMA's first automobile exhibition in more than fifteen years features three bodacious hot rods: a 1990 Formula One racing car, a 1987 F40 "super car" (the fastest car available for purchase at the time), and a 1950 166MM Barchetta, the prototypical two-seat convertible. Through April 5. . . . ¶ "Gesture and Pose: Twentieth-Century Photographs from the Collection." Through April 5. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 8:30.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"Frank Lloyd Wright's Designs for the Guggenheim Museum." There are concurrent shows of Wright works at the Metropolitan Museum and the Museum of Modern Art. Opens March 4. . . . ¶ "Robert Morris: The Mind/Body Problem," a retrospective exhibition, explores the intellectual underpinnings of this protean artist through a selection of his sculptures, drawings, and videos from the early sixties to the present. Morris's career touches on many of the most important artistic developments of the last thirty years—minimalism, performance art, Conceptualism—confounding expectations of aesthetic unity or continuity. His retrospective may seem daunting in its variety and complexity, but it rewards sustained examination as a kind of crash course in American artistic sensibilities since Abstract Expressionism. In conjunction with the artist's show at the Guggenheim SoHo. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6, and Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

Guggenheim Museum SoHo, 575 Broadway—Nine installations with mirrors, by Robert Morris. Through April 4. . . . ¶ Eighty watercolors, made between 1911 and 1944, by the Russian artist Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944), whose art has been so well assimilated into the mainstream that it feels like a kind of modernism lite. The earlier works, with their nervous, liquescent, quasi-figurative shapes, represent Kandinsky's art at its strongest. . . . ¶ "Industrial Elegance," a lobby exhibition, salutes design excellence in everyday objects, from ice-cube makers to Frisbees. Through March 6. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Saturday evenings until 8.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—"Collection in Context: A Year from the Collection Circa 1952." Some seventy-five paintings, sculptures, prints, drawings, and photographs. . . . ¶ A dual exhibition devoted to photographers Walker Evans (1903-75) and Dan Graham (born 1942). Both are heavy on urban and suburban dreary; tract housing, diners, billboards, and the landscape of commerce are recurrent images. Graham's videos are also on view. Through March 20. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—Fine art ("Watson and the Shark," by John Singleton Copley), casts of fossils, and a sample of items that have been found in fishes' bellies—armor, hubcaps, a fur coat—are a few of the items in "Sharks! Fact and Fantasy." There's also a walk-through diorama with life-size models of seventeen species of shark. The lighting and ambient sound make you think you're underwater. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—An exhibition of more than five hundred Egyptian objects from the museum's extensive collection, spanning thirteen hundred years of Pharaonic history. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

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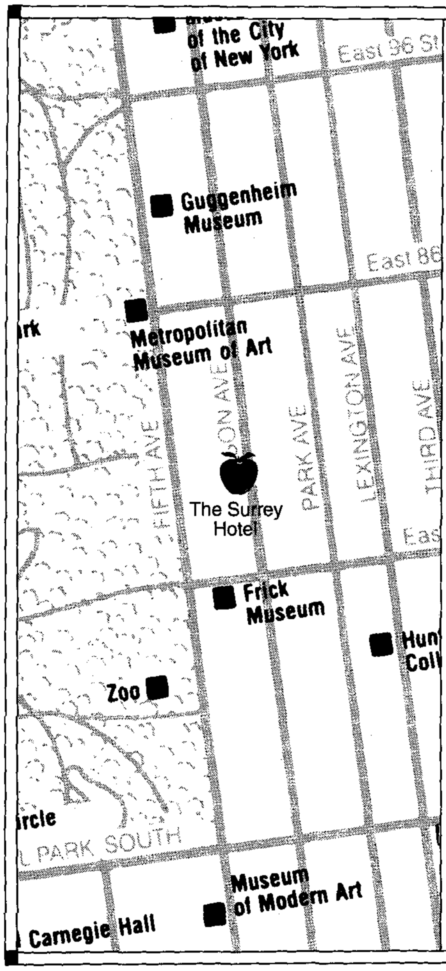

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N.Y., N.Y.
March 3 - April 16, 1994

BASEBALL UMPIRE, NEW YORK, JULY 17, 1951.
8 x 10" vintage gelatin silver print. Photograph by Irving Penn,
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ART—Cont'd

Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St.—"Asia/America: Identities in Contemporary Asian American Art." The society's first exhibit of contemporary art includes paintings, sculpture, and photography by twenty Asian-American artists, most of whom were born in Asia. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays evenings until 8; and Sundays, noon to 5.)

Bronx Museum of the Arts, 1040 Grand Concourse—"Beyond the Borders: Art by Recent Immigrants" features thirty artists from more than twenty countries. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—"Packaging the New: Design and the American Consumer 1925-75." . . . ¶ "Walter Crane: Design for Children." Crane (1845-1915), an English artist and contemporary of William Morris, is best known for his fairy-tale illustrations, included here, along with wallcoverings, textiles, and other decorative items. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Jewish Museum, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.—An exhibit of Israeli art from the museum's collection, notably "Kaddish," a series of eight etchings by Moshe Gershuni. . . . ¶ "A Postcolonial Kinderhood." A bedroom installation by Elaine Reichek, featuring twelve samplers embroidered with quotations about Jewish identity. . . . ¶ "Four Contemporary Works," by Aharon Gluska, Vivienne Koorland, Robert Wilson, and Joe Zucker. (Open Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, 11 to 5:45; Tuesdays, 11 to 8.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—"Gutenberg and the Genesis of Printing." At the center of this exhibit are the library's three Gutenberg Bibles (the single largest collection in the world) and a replica of the press on which they were printed. On Saturdays and Sundays at 1, there are demonstrations on the press. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10:30 to 5; Saturdays, 10:30 to 6; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Museum of American Folk Art, Columbus Ave. at 65th St.—A roomful of portraits of solemn, straitlaced New Englanders by Ammi Phillips (1788-1865), who was a highly successful portrait painter in his time. Phillips relied on similarities of pose, costume, and accessories, yet often succeeded in capturing a particular subject's character, as in, for example, "Lady in White." . . . ¶ A little-known chapter in craft history is explored in "Northern Scenes: Hooked Art of the Grenfell Mission." Wilfred T. Grenfell developed a cottage industry for the women who lived near his medical outpost in northern Newfoundland: they hooked decorative mats from strips of dyed silk and rayon. Patterns reflected the frozen North: walrus, polar bears, birds and fish, trappers and hunters. The results are stylized and bold, if somewhat static. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11:30 to 7:30.)

New Museum, 583 Broadway—"Bad Girls," the second installation of works by women and men, bringing a sense of humor to bear on feminist and gender issues. Opens March 5. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, and Sundays, noon to 6; Saturdays, noon to 8.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—"The Compleat Charles Addams." Some hundred and seventy drawings and watercolors by the artist; personal memorabilia, including his drawing table; original illustrations for "The Chas Addams Mother Goose"; and life-size photographs of the movie and television characters, next to enlargements of the cartoon originals. The broad selection of Addams' cartoons are placed in thematic context. One section, "The Creative Process," features drawings in progress shown alongside the finished product—a glimpse of the master at work. (Mondays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, 10 to 6, and Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6. The following listings lead off with new shows.)

William Bailey—Still-lifes, dating from 1964 to the present, in the artist's serene, delicately colored style. Opens March 3. Through April 9. (Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St.)

Enzo Cucchi—A sculpture and a number of drawings, conceived as a single work, by a member of the Italian wing of the neo-expressionists. Opens March 2. Through March 26. (Blum Helman, 20 W. 57th St.)

Louisa Matthiasdottir—Landscapes, still-lifes, and self-portraits by an artist who was born in Iceland in 1917 and has been living in New York since 1941. Opens March 8. Through April 12. (Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. Open Mondays.)

Paul Rickert / David Joel—Paintings of coastal Maine juxtaposed with paintings of the industrial Northeast to point out man's impact on the land. / Large paintings of figures surrounded by symbolic elements. Opens March 5. Through March 26. (Fischbach, 24 W. 57th St.)

Joan Snyder—Works *with* (as opposed to on) paper in a show examining the artist's appreciation of the medium as a source of structure, texture, and subject matter. Opens March 5. Through April 16. (Hirschl & Adler Modern, 21 E. 70th St.)

Idelle Weber—Metaphorical landscapes. Opens March 2. Through April 2. (Schmidt Bingham, 41 E. 57th St.)

"California in the 70s"—Paintings by artists living in the San Francisco Bay Area during that period, among them Richard Diebenkorn, William Wiley, and Joan Brown. Opens March 2. Through March 30. (Frumkin/Adams, 50 W. 57th St.)

"Trees"—The tree in all its guises, as viewed by artists from the early modern era (Charles Burchfield) to the present (Sylvia Mangold). Opens March 3. Through April 2. (Midtown Payson, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

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Joseph Cornell (1903-72)—Collages, most of them from either the thirties or the sixties, by America's premier homegrown Surrealist. The works of the thirties are appealing but derivative; they seem almost interchangeable with collages by Max Ernst. Cornell's later collages have their own whimsical, melancholy flavor, and some of them are on a par with his more famous box constructions. Through March 12. (Pace, 32 E. 57th St.)

Morris Hirschfield (1872-1946)—Hirschfield, who immigrated to New York from Eastern Europe and became a successful women's clothier, didn't pick up a paintbrush until after he retired, in 1937. The art dealer Sidney Janis bought Hirschfield's first painting, "Angora Cat," supplied him with canvas, and in 1965 gave him his first one-man gallery show. Nearly thirty years later, Janis's son Carroll gives us his second. Hirschfield's sartorial past is manifested in the intricate patterns that serve as backgrounds or frames for figures (usually women) and in the figures themselves. Their contours are rendered in a continuous line, as if they were cut from a dress pattern. The details often refer to fabric and accessories: the nudes in "Inseparable Friends" have just shed their slippers, and the beast in "Lion," its snug mane resembling a fur stole, is poised so as not to trample on the herringbone-patterned shrubbery. Through March 19. (Janis, 110 W. 57th St.)

Richmond Burton—Abstract oil paintings on linen, by an artist pursuing the elaboration of formal effects. In each painting, protoplasmic cells of color are loosely organized on an underlying grid, creating an impression of circulatory movement. Burton also achieves a trippy effect of optical pulsation. Through March 19. (Marks, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St.)

Fernand Léger (1881-1955)—A show of tapestries and mosaics, focussing on the artist's well-known themes: "Les Loisirs," "Les Constructeurs," and "Les Trois Musiciens"; also, small ceramic sculptures. Through April 2. (Marisa del Re, 41 E. 57th St.)

Joan Miró (1893-1983)—Drawings that have not been shown since 1941. Through March 26. (Galerie Lelong, 20 W. 57th St.)

Alice Neel (1900-84)—Paintings of Spanish Harlem, where the artist lived from 1938 to 1961. Through March 19. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

Harry Roseman—A series of drawings and etchings of interwoven lines. Through March 26. (Davis & Langdale, 231 E. 60th St.)

Mark Rothko (1903-70)—Twelve paintings from 1969, by this renowned Abstract Expressionist. Through March 19. (Pace, 32 E. 57th St.)

Charles Seliger—Small-scale organic abstractions done in the past several years. Through April 2. (Rosenfeld, 24 W. 57th St.)

Kenneth Snelson—Sculptures, from 1959 to 1993, parts of which are held in place by wires and appear to be suspended in mid-air. Through April 9. (Davidson, 41 E. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Richard Stankiewicz (1922-83) **and Jean Tinguely** (1925-91)—A show devoted to two artists who combined the humorous use of junk with a serious interest in formal sculptural issues. Through April 16. (Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

William Tucker—Abstract plaster and bronze sculptures. Through April 2. (McKee, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

"Alternative Visions"—French wallpapers of the nineteenth century shown alongside works by Brice Marden, Agnes Martin, Carl Andre, and others, to point out their similarities. Through April 2. (Mathes, 41 E. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

"The Forgotten Folk Art of the 1940s"—This exhibition aims to provide a historical context for the outsider art that is all the rage. On view are paintings by Morris Hirshfield, Israel Litwak, Grandma Moses, and others. Through March 19. (Galerie St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St.)

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

Leonardo Drew—Large-scale sculptures made of metal, cotton, rust, and rope—materials meant to evoke African-American history. Opens March 5. Through April 9. (Toll, 146 Greene St.)

Jacques Flèchemuller—Humorous paintings of figures, such as a dancer, a rider, the Madonna, and General Custer. Opens March 5. Through March 30. (Nosei, 100 Prince St.)

Adrian Piper—Works from 1968 to 1970 called "information pages," which include text and photographs. Opens March 3. Through March 26. (Cooper, 155 Wooster St.)

David Rabinowitch—Floor sculptures: two recent works and two from the sixties. Opens March 5. Through March 31. (Ikeda, 130 Prince St.)

Joseph Raffael—Large-scale watercolors based on nature, the focus being two monumental diptychs of lily ponds. Opens March 5. Through April 13. (Hoffman, 429 West Broadway.)

•

George Dokoupil—Paintings in candle soot on canvas by an artist fond of unconventional materials (a previous series of paintings was done with mother's milk). In his latest series, "The New Immigrants," images of exile and flight, derived from photojournalistic sources, are rendered obscure by the candle soot. They waver between their documentary origins and Dokoupil's artistic effects. Specific displacements of Bosnians, Haitians, Cambodians, etc., become emblems of a larger—or perhaps just vaguer—

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ART—Cont'd

horror. Through March 12. (Shafrazi, 119 Wooster St.)

Robert Zakanitch—Four enormous unstretched canvases, eleven feet high by thirty feet wide, bearing the collective title "Big Bungalow Suite." Zakanitch first came to prominence in the mid-seventies as one of the pattern-and-decoration artists, and has stuck to his aesthetic guns. The "Big Bungalow Suite" is, in the scale and density of its ornament, well-nigh overpowering. Depending on your point of view, it's either a tour de force or an exercise in visual tedium. Through March 31. (McCoy, 129 Greene St.) . . . **note:** Paintings are showing concurrently at McCoy, 41 E. 57th St., through March 12.

Richard Bosman—"Fragments," small-scale paintings and sculptures of hands and feet. Through March 25. (Brooke Alexander, 59 Wooster St.)

Chris Burden—"America's Darker Moments," a series of tiny cast-tin figures grouped to represent such scenes as the Kennedy assassination and the Kent State uprising; "L.A.P.D. Uniform," an edition of thirty over-scale uniforms; and "Small Guns," a series of incongruously juxtaposed objects. Through March 26. (Gagosian, 136 Wooster St.)

Greg Colson—Assemblages of workbench and household scraps, by a Los Angeles artist. Through March 19. (Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St.)

James Croak / Jean Feinberg—Life-size sculptures of male nudes, cast in soil. / Abstract paintings. Through March 19. (Stux, 163 Mercer St.)

Lester Johnson—Near-monochromatic oils from the sixties, when Johnson kept a studio on the Bowery; painted over and over, the final versions coalesce into elusive figures. Through April 2. (Thorp, 103 Prince St.)

Ellen Kozak—A series of liquid, limpid landscapes of the Hudson River Valley. Each richly colored work has been carefully built up with eight to ten layers of oil paint. The results are almost aquatic, like underwater scenes. Through March 15. (Roy, 46 Greene St.)

William Steiger—Paintings relating to the artist's monumental industrial structures, plus one of a Ferris wheel. Through March 26. (Condeso/Lawler, 524 Broadway.)

Beth Ames Swartz—Spiritual, cosmological paintings. Through March 19. (Donahue, 560 Broadway.)

Kevin Wixted—Oil and wax in organic colors on wood panels with architectural forms. Through March 19. (Beitzel, 102 Prince St.)

Pioneers—Works in a variety of mediums, by Marcel Duchamp, Man Ray, Francis Picabia, and others. Through March 25. (Guillaume, 203 W. Houston St. Tuesdays through Saturdays, 1 to 6.)

"Untitled"—Sculptures and installations by five women. Through March 19. (Postmasters, 80 Greene St.)

ANTIQUES AND AUCTIONS

Classic Cartoons—An exhibition of more than a hundred art works and memorabilia relating to the "Looney Tunes" and "Merrie Melodies" cartoons of the thirties, including original model sheets and story sketches by such animators as Bob Clampett, Chuck Jones, and Tex Avery. (Warner Brothers Studio Store Gallery, 1 E. 57th St. Mondays through Saturdays, 10 to 8, and Thursday evenings until 9; Sundays, noon to 5. Through April 15.)

The Way She Was—At age sixteen, Barbra Streisand was scrounging around New York City thrift shops for vintage clothes and affordable apartment furnishings. That passion blossomed into a taste for, notably, Art Deco and Art Nouveau. On March 3 at 1 (at Christie's, Park Ave. at 59th St.) and March 4 at 10 and 2 (at Christie's East, 219 E. 67th St.), Ms. Streisand's collection will go on the block, including a Tiffany Peony lamp (estimate $250,000–$350,000) around which Ms. Streisand designed an entire room in her Beverly Hills home. (For further information, call 546-1119.)

White Space—White Columns, New York City's oldest not-for-profit alternative space, will seek to support its visual-arts programs by auctioning approximately a hundred and sixty paintings, sculptures, and drawings by contemporary artists, among them Ross Bleckner, Sean Landers, and William Wegman, at a gala (attendance not required) on March 7, from 7 to 10. Interested parties may view the works and offer silent bids at the gallery, 154 Christopher St., March 2-5, from noon to 6. (For further information, call 924-4212.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

Free As the Air

The Dorothea Lange show that opens March 3 at Houk Friedman (851 Madison Avenue; through May 7) is the first substantial exhibition of her photography in New York since the 1966 Museum of Modern Art retrospective that secured Lange's place in the pantheon. There are forty-three pictures on view, taken between 1933 and 1963, including many extraordinary images that are both moving and memorable. They are all vintage prints, some made by the photographer herself, and they flawlessly impart the richness and subtlety of Lange's vision. The show includes some of her most famous images from the thirties, many of which were produced under the auspices of the Farm Security Administration.

Lange's power to communicate the hardships that Americans suffered during the Depression grew out of her clarity of purpose. Without fussiness or condescension, she photographed men, women, and children whose lives and circumstances gave them no worldly esteem, and she discovered ways to convey their grace and human presence. She shows us what it means to give subjects the dignity they deserve. She was the kind of populist who believed that the truth about inequity and the right to self-determination was sufficient to make the case for freedom and justice. It was Lange, after all, who gave us the classic shot of the gas-station sign that read, "Air. This is your country, don't let the big men take it away from you."

There's more Lange on the way: in May, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art will mount a new retrospective, which will travel around the country before arriving in New York next year.

Gwen Akin and Allan Ludwig—Unusual "reconstructed" images that have been made from vintage found photographs. Through March 16. (Auchincloss, 558 Broadway.)

Walker Evans—Nine hand gravures (made by Jon Goodman from Evans' original negatives) of the Brooklyn Bridge, originally taken for an edition of Hart Crane's "The Bridge." Through April 16. (Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave.)

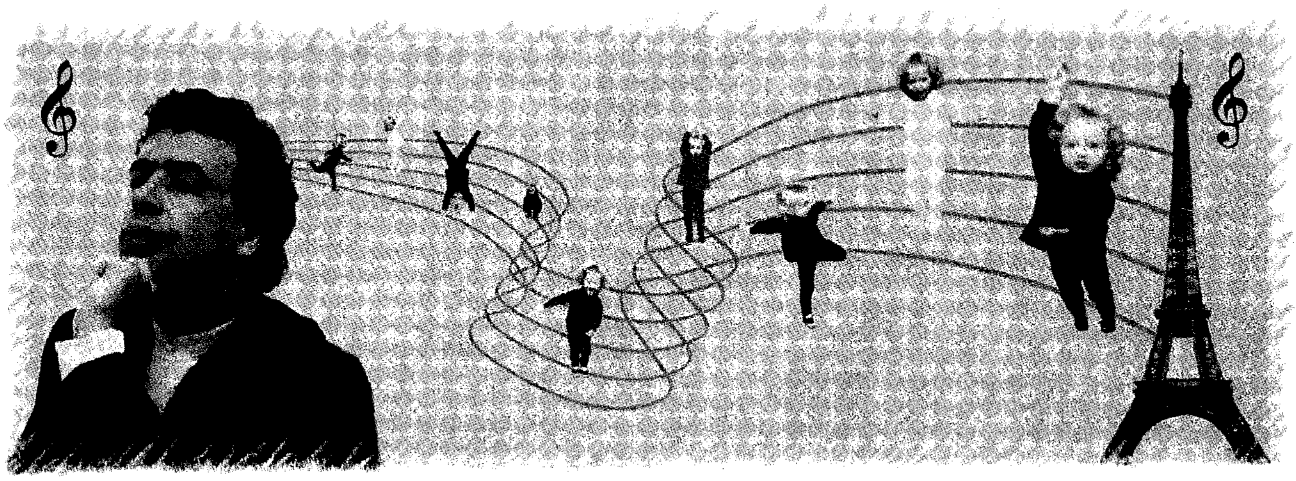
Kenro Izu—Floral studies and nudes. Through March 5. (Greenberg, 120 Wooster St.)

Susan Rankaitis—Photographs treated with paint, chemical washes, and other materials. Through March 12. (Mann, 42 E. 76th St.)

"Devotion, Faith and Fervor"—A small show of images from 1930 to 1992, documenting religious life in the rural South. Pictures by Walker Evans, Margaret Bourke-White, Robert Frank, Eudora Welty, and several lesser-known photographers. Through March 5. (Gallery 292, 120 Wooster St.)

International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St.—"Cycles," a retrospective of work by Judy Dater. Through April 3. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Whitney Museum of American Art.)



NELSON BAKERMAN

Semyon Bychkov conducts l'Orchestre de Paris at Carnegie Hall.

CLASSICAL MUSIC

Liberté, Égalité, Sonorité

WHEREAS most of the world's principal orchestras developed over time within the cultural landscapes of their cities, l'Orchestre de Paris exploded onto the scene full grown, in 1967. Its first music director, Charles Munch, handpicked its members with an ear toward defining an authentic French orchestral sonority. When he died a year later, the directorship passed to a succession of eminent conductors, none of whom, as it turned out, have been French: the Austrian Herbert von Karajan, the Hungarian-turned-Briton Georg Solti, the Argentina-born Israeli Daniel Barenboim, and, since 1989, the Russian-turned-American Semyon Bychkov.

Bychkov is himself a cosmopolitan phenomenon. Until recently, he served as principal guest conductor of the St. Petersburg Philharmonic; he resigned in January to protest what he felt was Russian governmental interference that reeked of old-style Sovietism. Meanwhile, Paris lets him go freely about his artistic business, which includes reining in some of his French musicians' rampant individuality and refining their ensemble playing without sacrificing the group's distinct national style. "One of the most interesting qualities about my orchestra," he says, "is that it has its own sonority, its own temperament, its own identity—and this in a time when it's difficult to find your own identity, let alone keep it." The orchestra's two Carnegie Hall programs (March 8 and March 10) are designed to demonstrate its abilities to interpret across a broad spectrum, from the Gallicism of Berlioz and the intense power of Beethoven and Shostakovich to the ultra-sixties modernity of Berio.

(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera House is 362-6000; for Avery Fisher Hall, 875-5030; for Carnegie Hall and Weill Recital Hall, 247-7800; for the Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St., 570-3949; and for the Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St., 854-7799.)

OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA—**STIFFELIO**, with Sharon Sweet, Plácido Domingo, Vladimir Chernov, and Paul Plishka; conducted by James Levine. (March 2 at 8 and March 5 at 1:30.) . . . **ADRIANA LECOUVREUR**, with Mirella Freni, Stefania Toczyska, Luis Lima, and Sherrill Milnes; Roberto Abbado. (March 3 and March 7 at 8.) . . . **DIALOGUES OF THE CARMELITES**, sung in English, with Dawn Upshaw, Teresa Stratas, Heidi Grant Murphy, Helga Dernesch, and Florence Quivar; Kent Nagano. (March 4 and March 8 at 8.) . . . **LA FILLE DU RÉGIMENT**, with Harolyn Blackwell, Rosalind Elias, Frank Lopardo, Bruno Praticò, and, in a speaking role, Beatrice Arthur; Edoardo Müller. (March 5 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC—Leonard Slatkin conducts Piston's Symphony No. 2, Ravel's G-Major Piano Concerto (with Alicia de Larrocha), and Rachmaninoff's "Symphonic Dances." (Avery Fisher Hall. March 3 and March 5 at 8, March 4 at 11 A.M., and March 8 at 7:30.)

THE MEN AND THE BOYS—For what is apparently the first time ever, all three of New York's Anglican-style men-and-boys choirs—the St. Thomas Choir (directed by Gerre Hancock), the Choir of Boys and Men of the Church of the Transfiguration (under Donald Joyce), and the Boy Choir of Grace Church (led by Bruce McInnis)—will consolidate into a seventy-five-voice ensemble to perform choral classics by Vaughan Williams, Tallis, Byrd, Parry, and others. A benefit concert. (Brick Presbyterian Church, Park Ave. at 91st St. March 2 at 8. For information about tickets, call 289-0399.)

ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S CHOIR—James Litton directs Verdi's Requiem, accompanied by organist William Trafka. (St. Bartholomew's Church, Park Ave. at 50th St. 751-1616, ext. 249. March 2 at 8.)

VIENNA PHILHARMONIC—At Carnegie Hall, Riccardo Muti conducting. March 2 at 8: Beethoven's Symphony No. 2, Strauss's "Don Juan," and Dvořák's Symphony No. 8. . . . ¶ March 3 at 8: Mozart's Symphony No. 34, Stravinsky's "Le Baiser de la Fée," and Schubert's Symphony No. 9. . . . ¶ March 4 at 8: Mozart's Symphony No. 36 (the "Linz") and Bruckner's Symphony No. 7.

ORCHESTRA OF ST. LUKE'S—John Adams conducts the New York première of his own Chamber Symphony, as well as Shostakovich's Suite No. 1 for Jazz Orchestra, Nancarrow's "Studies for Player Piano No. 3C, No. 6, and No. 7" (orchestrated by the late Yvar Mikhashoff), Silvestre Revueltas's "Homenaje a Federico García Lorca," and Milhaud's "La Création du Monde." (Alice Tully Hall. March 3 at 8.)

ASCENSION MUSIC CHORUS—Dennis Keene directs a-cappella motets by Josquin Desprez, Palestrina, Victoria, Byrd, Tallis, and many others. (Church of the Ascension, Fifth Ave. at 10th St. 254-8553. March 3 at 8.)

BROOKLYN PHILHARMONIC—Nicholas McGegan conducts music emanating from the mid-eighteenth-century aesthetic of Sturm und Drang, including works by Haydn, Joseph Martin Kraus, Jiři Antonín Benda (his "Medea," a melodrama, narrated by Claire Bloom), and Mozart. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100. March 4-5 at 8.)

COSMOPOLITAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA—Michael Morgan conducts Haydn's "Surprise" Symphony, Copland's Clarinet Concerto (featuring Jon Manasse), Chris DeBlasio's "All the Way Through Evening" (with baritone Michael Dash), and Mozart's "Jupiter" Symphony. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. March 5 at 2. . . . **NOTE:** A pre-concert recital, beginning at 1 and open to ticket holders, will feature songs and chamber music by DeBlasio and Beethoven.)

I CANTORI DI NEW YORK—Mark Shapiro directs Sydney Hodkinson's "Alte Liebeslieder" (Book One), choral songs by Brahms, madrigals by Monteverdi, Debussy's "Trois Chansons de Charles d'Orléans," and Britten's "Five Flower Songs." (St. Ignatius Episcopal Church, West End Ave. at 87th St. 439-4758. March 5 at 8.)

NEW YORK CHAMBER SYMPHONY—Gerard Schwarz conducts an all-Beethoven concert: his Symphonies No. 4 and No. 6 and Piano Concerto No. 4 (featuring Ivan Moravec). (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. March 5 at 8 and March 6 at 3.)

METROPOLITAN OPERA ORCHESTRA—James Levine conducts Bolcom's "Fantasia Concertante," Mahler's "Rückert Lieder" (featuring mezzo-soprano Marilyn Horne), and Beethoven's Symphony No. 3. (Carnegie Hall. March 6 at 3.)

ST. CECILIA CHORUS AND ORCHESTRA—David Randolph directs Mozart's "Vesperae Solennes de Confessore" and Bruckner's B-Flat-Minor Missa Solemnis. (Church of the Heavenly Rest, Fifth Ave. at 90th St. March 6 at 4. For information about tickets, call 1-718 428-0007.)

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CLASSICAL MUSIC—Cont'd

Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra—Vassily Sinaisky conducts Glinka's "Russlan and Ludmilla" Overture, Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto (featuring Gil Shaham), and Shostakovich's Symphony No. 6. (Avery Fisher Hall. March 6 at 7:30.)

Concert Royal—James Richman leads his period-instrument ensemble in all of Mozart's works for flute and orchestra: the two solo concertos, the Concerto for Flute and Harp, and the C-Major Andante; featuring flutist Sandra Miller and harpist Marie-Pierre Langlamet. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. March 8 at 8.)

L'Orchestre de Paris—At Carnegie Hall, Semyon Bychkov conducting. March 8 at 8: Berio's "Sinfonia" (with the assistance of the Electric Phoenix vocal ensemble) and Berlioz' "Symphonie Fantastique." . . . ¶ March 10 at 8: Beethoven's Symphony No. 5 and Shostakovich's Symphony No. 5.

RECITALS

Guarneri Quartet—Performing string quartets by Mozart (in B-Flat Major, K. 458) and Ravel, as well as Schnittke's Piano Quintet (with Gary Graffman assisting). (Alice Tully Hall. March 2 at 8.)

Bargemusic—Fred Sherry plays Bach's Suite No. 4 for Unaccompanied Cello, violinist Kyung Sun Lee and pianist Joseph Villa perform Debussy's Sonata, and all join for Brahms' C-Minor Piano Trio. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. March 3 at 7:30 and March 6 at 4.)

Arcadian Academy—Nicholas McGegan oversees a concert of chamber works crafted to illustrate the transalpine influence of Italian Baroque masters; including the "Ballo del Gran Duca" by Giovanni Battista Buonamente (who spent time at the court of Vienna), works by Nicola Matteis and Pietro Locatelli (who emigrated to England and Holland, respectively), and Couperin's "Le Parnasse ou l'Apothéose de Corelli" and "La Paix de Parnasse" (in which the composer seeks a reconciliation of the French and Italian styles). (Metropolitan Museum. March 3 at 8.)

Todd Crow—Pianist, performing Schubert's A-Minor Sonata (D. 845), Schoenberg's "Drei Klavierstücke" (Op. 11), Bartók's "Dance Suite," and set two of Debussy's "Images." (Miller Theatre. March 3 at 8.)

Ruth Laredo and Jacques Rouvier—Performing two-piano works by Rachmaninoff. (Metropolitan Museum. March 4 at 7.)

Evgeny Kissin—The pianist performs Schumann's "Arabesque" (Op. 18) and C-Major Fantasy (Op. 17), Schubert's A-Minor Sonata (D. 784), and Liszt's "Four Transcendental Études." (Avery Fisher Hall. March 4 at 8.)

Trio Fontenay—Performing piano trios by Ives, Dvořák (in B-Flat Major, Op. 21), and Schubert (in B-Flat Major, D. 898). (Weill Recital Hall. March 4 at 8.)

Salute to Davidovsky—Parnassus and the Composers Conference Chamber Players observe Mario Davidovsky's sixtieth birthday by performing his "Quartetto" (for flute and strings), String Quartet No. 4, "Synchronisms No. 6," "Pennplay," and scenes from "Shir-ha Shirim." (Miller Theatre. March 4 at 8.)

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center—Bassoonist Milan Turkovic comes to the fore in chamber works by Mozart, Hindemith, and Saint-Saëns (his final work, the Bassoon Sonata, Op. 168). Also on the program are the première of Bright Sheng's Concertino for Clarinet and String Quartet (spotlighting the Society's music director, clarinettist David Shifrin) and Fauré's C-Minor Piano Quartet. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. March 4 at 8 and March 6 at 5.) . . . **note:** Young performers will join Mr. Turkovic in chamber music at the Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St., on March 8 at 12:30. No tickets necessary.

LISTENING BOOTH

Shostakovich: Jazz Music, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Riccardo Chailly, conductor. (London); **Alexander Vertinsky: Cabaret Russe** (Le Chant du Monde). In the nineteen-thirties, the Soviet musical apparatchiks commissioned Shostakovich to write two Suites for Jazz Orchestra (the first of which the Orchestra of St. Luke's plays this week) to upgrade the level of the country's popular music. The composer provided a worthy solution to a bizarre assignment, especially in his longer Suite No. 2, movements of which might almost pass for Offenbach, Victor Herbert, or John Philip Sousa—but probably not for Shostakovich. The Concertgebouw plays both suites, and other pop-related Shostakovichiana of the period, with wit and clarity. For an authentic, exotic taste of what Russians were *really* hearing in the clubs back then, dip into the two-disk assemblage of thirty-two obscure items sung (and mostly composed) by Alexander Nikolayevich Vertinsky. They're slower and sadder than their Berlin or Parisian cabaret counterparts, and (at least to non-speakers of Russian) *gavaiski gitari* sounds somehow more romantic than "Hawaiian guitars." His seductive crooning and torching are as captivating as the chapters of his peripatetic life, which are vividly recounted in the accompanying booklet.

Leonard Bernstein Festival—A day of tribute and recollection. Videotapes of Bernstein rehearsing, performing, teaching, and recording will be screened (with sessions at 11 a.m., 2, 3:30, and 8:30). At 7, soprano Louise Edeiken and baritone Kurt Ollmann will perform selections from several of the composer's stage works. (Metropolitan Museum. March 5. For information about schedules and tickets, call 570-3949.)

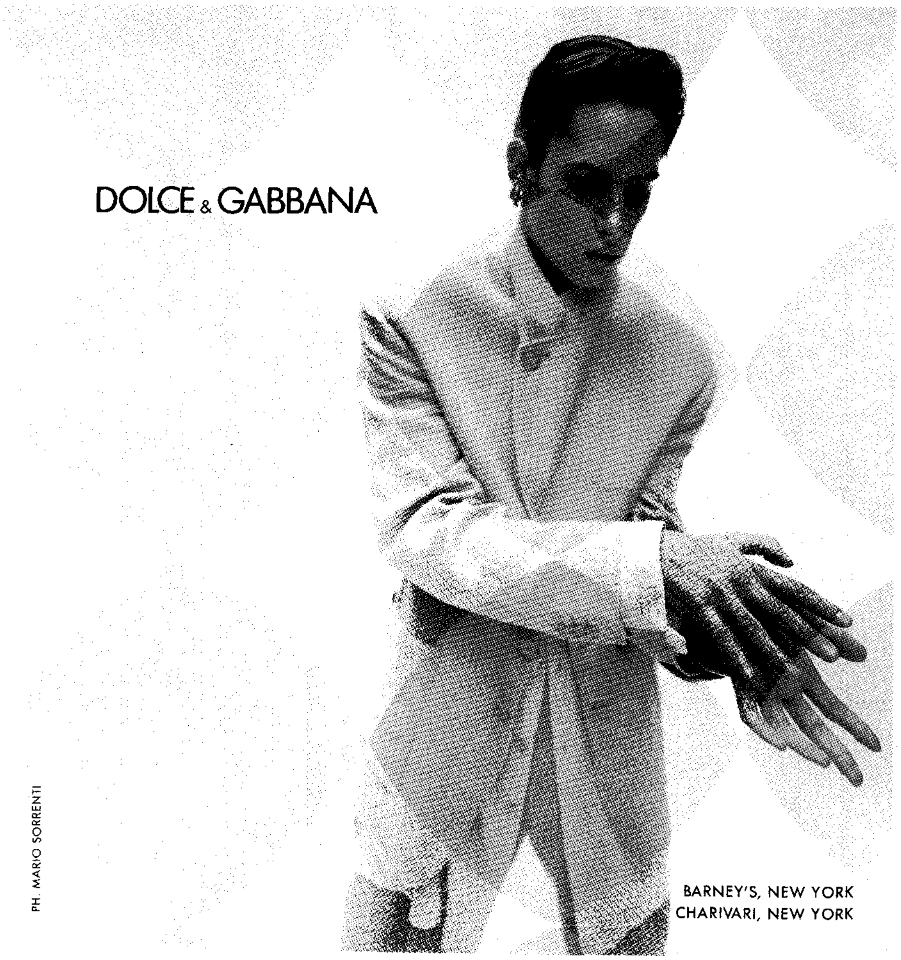
What the Heckelphone—The heckelphone—a baritone oboe-bassoon hybrid—is destined to spend most of its life packed away in its case; but Mark Perchanok will get his out to play Hindemith's Trio for Heckelphone, Viola, and Piano. In the rest of the program, he'll play a garden-variety soprano oboe in chamber works by Arthur Foote, Charles Martin Loeffler, and August Klughardt (a melodrama, here narrated by Han Kurr). Violist Eugene Becker and pianist Eleanor Nelson assist. (Paul Hall, Juilliard School, 155 W. 65th St. March 5 at 6. No tickets necessary.)

Bach Chamber Soloists of New York—Performing Bach's "Brandenburg" Concerto No. 5, Cantata No. 202, and C-Major Trio Sonata, with soloists including soprano Carol Wilson, harpsichordist Robert Wolinsky, oboist Stephen Taylor, and flutist Alan Cox. (Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 W. 69th St. March 5 at 7:30. Tickets at the door on the day of the concert.)

Alban Berg Quartet—The foursome from Vienna performs string quartets by Haydn (in D Minor, Op. 76, No. 2, the "Quinten"), Berio (the United States première of his "Notturno"), and Janáček (his Second, subtitled "Intimate Letters"). (Carnegie Hall. March 5 at 8.)

Hesperion XX—The trio of soprano Montserrat Figueras, viola da gamba player Jordi Savall, and theorbist/guitarist Rolf Lislevand perform music by Marin Marais, Giulio Caccini, Tobias Hume, Tarquinio Merula, and others. (Alice Tully Hall. March 6 at 2.)

New York Chamber Ensemble—Stephen Rogers Radcliffe conducts his one-on-a-part ensemble in Haydn's Notturno No. 2, Ravel's "Ma Mère l'Oye," de Falla's "El Corregidor y la Molinera," and Rimsky-Korsakov's "Cappriccio Espagnole." (Marble Collegiate Church, 1 W. 29th St. March 6 at 2:30. No tickets necessary.)



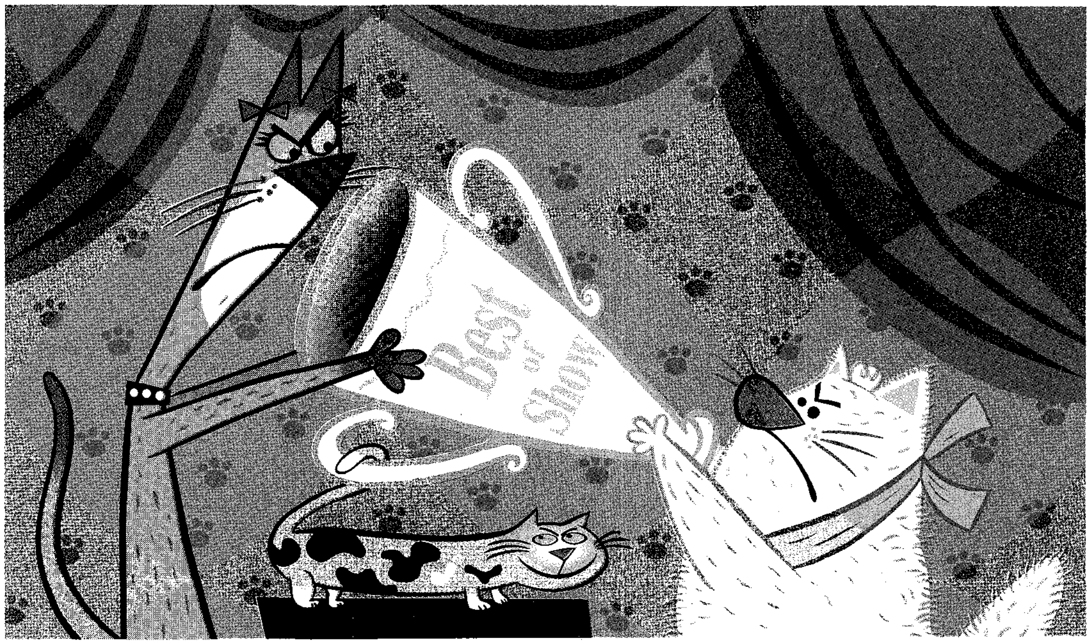
CLASSICAL MUSIC—Cont'd

Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg—The violinist plays Stravinsky's Divertimento, Grieg's Sonata No. 3, Mozart's E-Major Adagio (K. 261), Bolcom's Sonata No. 3, and Ravel's "Tzigane"; with pianist Sandra Rivers. (Avery Fisher Hall. March 6 at 3.)

Enrico Gatti and the ARTEK Ensemble—In his New York début concert, the violinist joins the period-instrument group in a program heavily weighted toward Italian Baroque sonatas (by Marco Uccellini, Tarquinio Merula, Corelli, Francesco Maria Veracini, Giuseppe Tartini, and others). Presented by Music Before 1800. (Corpus Christi Church, 529 W. 121st St. 666-0675. March 6 at 4.)

Off-Season Santa—This weekly musical salon sponsors a five-hour marathon of chamber-music classics featuring more than fifty musicians. Each attendee for this performance will be asked to add at least one wrapped toy to the pile being collected for needy children. (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. March 6, from 5 to 10. No tickets necessary.)

Kevin Kenner—The pianist performs an all-Chopin recital that includes the four ballades and the B-Flat-Minor Scherzo. (Walter Reade Theatre, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. March 7 at 7:30. For information about tickets, call 875-5050.)



The International Cat Show at Madison Square Garden.

DAVID SHELDON

Maurizio Pollini—The eminent pianist performs Beethoven's Sonatas No. 5 (Op. 10, No. 1) and No. 21 (Op. 53, the "Waldstein"), Schumann's "Kreisleriana," and Chopin's First Ballade. (Carnegie Hall. March 7 at 8.)

Victoria de los Angeles—One approaches a soprano's seventieth-birthday tour with a measure of realistic expectation, of course. But reports of this eminent interpreter's recent performances suggest that her audience will witness an exercise in artistry rather than in nostalgia. The program will include a good measure of classic Spanish and French art songs (by Fauré, Guastavino, and many others) that have glowed in the singer's recitals through the past fifty years. Pianist Albert Guinovart assists in this benefit recital. (Alice Tully Hall. March 7 at 8.)

Sylvan Winds—Presenting Baroque chamber music with winds, by Zelenka, Handel, Wilhelm Friedemann Bach, Fasch, and Telemann. (Weill Recital Hall. March 7 at 8.)

Menuhin Festival Piano Quartet—Performing piano quartets by Beethoven (in E-Flat Major, Op. 14), Mendelssohn (in F Minor), and Brahms (in G Minor). (Miller Theatre. March 8 at 8.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Cats Meow—Equal time for felines. The International Cat Show may not have the bloodlines of the Westminster Dog Show, but having Socks in the White House gives it a populist edge. In addition to the eight-ring judging contests for some five hundred felines, the show will feature a musical called "First Cat," a jungle-cat look-alike contest (for amateur cats), Q.&A. sessions with veterinarians, psychics, therapists, and groomers, and a marketplace of cat items, from kitten calendars to kitty litter. (Madison Square Garden. March 4, from 3 to 9; March 5, from 10 to 6; and March 6, from 10 to 5. Tickets at the door on the days of the event.)

Life During Wartime—The Cooper Union will convene "Sarajevo New York: The City Under Siege," a daylong symposium providing information about the situation in Sarajevo. Journalist Christopher Hitchens, Muhamed Sacirbey (Ambassador to the U.N. for Bosnia and Herzegovina), and several others will discuss the media, the survival of a country's culture in wartime, and the role of the United States in the conflict. In addition, there will be films and videos from Sarajevo, a Balkan bookstore, workshops, and performances by Bosnian artists. (Great Hall, Third Ave. at 7th St. March 5, from 10:30 to 10. No tickets necessary.)

Unpenned—Jean Harris will give a talk at the 1994 PEN Writing Awards for Prisoners, and Nicole Breedlove, Hettie Jones, Walter Mosley, and Frederic Tuten will read the winning entries. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. March 6 at 3. No tickets necessary.)

Readings—March 4 at 7: Susan Minot will read from her own fiction. (Vanderbilt Hall, New York University, 40 Washington Square S., at Macdougal St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ March 7 at 7:30: Benjamin Cheever and Beverly Lowry will read from their own fiction. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 645-5848.) . . . ¶ March 7 at 8: Amy Clampitt and Debora Greger will read from their own poetry. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.) . . . ¶ March 8 at 7:30: James Galvin and Jane Miller will read from their own poetry. (Dia Center for the Arts, 155 Mercer St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.) . . . ¶ March 8 at 8: John Ashbery and Kenneth Koch will read from their own poetry. (New School, 66 W. 12th St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.)

Talks—March 7 at 6: Jewelle Gomez will give a talk titled "Stonewall: The Romance and the Politics." (New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. 930-0571.) . . . ¶ March 7 at 6: Art critic Robert Hughes will give a talk titled "Seeing Lucian Freud." (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949.) . . . ¶ March 8 at 6: Geneticist R. C. Lewontin will give a talk titled "Genes, Environment, and Organisms." (New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. 930-0571.)

Walks & Tours—March 3 at 6: The Marymount Manhattan College Dance Company will demonstrate ballet-barre basics and the process of choreography. For more information, call 517-0651. . . . ¶ March 6 at 3: Rabbi Beryl Epstein will lead a tour of a matzo factory; sponsored by the Brooklyn Historical Society. For more information, call 1-718 624-0890.

FOR KIDS

(A list of activities for children and their parents or other adults.)

"The Secret Garden"—Theatreworks/USA presents an hour-long musical version of the Frances Hodgson Burnett novel. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 677-5959. March 5-6 and March 12 at 12:30 and March 13 at 10:30 and 12:30.)

The Wright Stuff—The Museum of Modern Art's Family Gallery Program tours the Frank Lloyd Wright exhibit on March 5, from 10 to 11 (before the museum opens to the general public). (Edward John Noble Education Center, 18 W. 54th St. 708-9400.)

The Paper Bag Players—Final performances of the engagement. (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. March 5-6 at 2.)

Musically Minded—Erez Yoeli and Maura Coleman, pre-teen students at Manhattan School of Music Preparatory, portray Mozart and his sister Nannerl in "Young Wolfgang," a production by the period-instrument ensemble VineyardMusicke. (Vineyard Theatre, 309 E. 26th St. 353-8374. March 5 at 11 and 1:30.) . . . ¶ Rachmaninoff's "Symphonic Dances" is the featured piece in a New York Philharmonic Young People's Concert. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. March 5 at 2.) . . . ¶ As part of the series "Growing Up with Opera," the Metropolitan Opera Guild stages "The Barber of Seville," shortened to an hour and forty-five minutes. (John Jay Theatre, 899 Tenth Ave., at 59th St. March 5-6 and March 12-13 at 2. For information about tickets, call 769-7008.)

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Knicks—Vs. the Nets, March 3 at 7:30.

Nets—Vs. the Philadelphia 76ers, March 6 at 6.

Rangers—Vs. the Philadelphia Flyers, March 2. . . . ¶ Vs. the Islanders, March 4. . . . ¶ Vs. the Detroit Red Wings, March 7. (Game time, 7:30.)

Islanders—Vs. the Rangers, March 5 at 7:10.

Devils—Vs. the Calgary Flames, March 5 at 1:35. . . . ¶ Vs. the Quebec Nordiques, March 7 at 7:35.

(The Knicks and the Rangers play at Madison Square Garden, 465-6000; the Nets and the Devils at the Meadowlands Arena, 1-201 935-3900; and the Islanders at the Nassau Coliseum, 1-516 794-9300.)

THE MOVIES

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			2	3	4	5
6	7	8				

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN "MOVIES IN BRIEF," STARTING ON PAGE 29.

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: "The Piano" (†).
Theatre 2: A program of short films from "The 24th International Tournée of Animation."
Theatre 3: "The Cement Garden" (†).
Theatre 4: "Savage Nights" (†).
Theatre 5: Through March 3: "The Snapper" (directed by Stephen Frears). From March 4: "Sirens" (John Duigan).
Theatre 6: "Naked" (Mike Leigh).

Little Theatre, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
Through March 3: "Hallelujah!" (1929, King Vidor); and "War and Peace" (1956, Vidor), with Audrey Hepburn, Henry Fonda, and Mel Ferrer.
March 4-6: "Beyond the Forest" (1949, King Vidor), with Bette Davis; and "Ruby Gentry" (1952, Vidor), with Jennifer Jones and Charlton Heston.
March 7: Theatre closed.
March 8: "Wine of Youth" (1924, King Vidor) and "Wild Oranges" (1924, Vidor).

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "Sugar Hill" (Leon Ichaso), with Wesley Snipes and Michael Wright.
Theatre 2: "Ace Ventura: Pet Detective" (Tom Shadyac), with Jim Carrey.
Theatre 3: "Romeo Is Bleeding" (†).

Village Theatre VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th. (982-0400)
Theatre 1: "The Remains of the Day" (†).
Theatre 2: "On Deadly Ground" (Steven Seagal), with Seagal.
Theatre 3: "Philadelphia" (†).
Theatre 4: Through March 3: "I'll Do Anything" (†). From March 4: "Angie" (Martha Coolidge).
Theatre 5: "Silent Tongue" (Sam Shepard).
Theatre 6: "Blue Chips" (William Friedkin), with Nick Nolte.
Theatre 7: "What's Eating Gilbert Grape" (†).

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
Through March 3: "The Life and Times of Allen Ginsberg" (Jerry Aronson), a documentary.
From March 4: A program of Academy Award-nominated live-action and documentary short films.

Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave. at 12th. (529-6799)
Theatre 1: "Blink" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Fugitive" (Andrew Davis), with Harrison Ford and Tommy Lee Jones.
Theatre 3: "Short Cuts" (†).
Theatre 4: Through March 3: "Blank Check" (Rupert Wainwright), with Brian Bonsall. From March 4: "China Moon" (John Bailey).
Theatre 5: "8 Seconds" (John G. Avildsen), with Luke Perry.
Theatre 6: Through March 3: "My Father, the Hero" (Steve Miner), with Gérard Depardieu. From March 4: "Where the Rivers Flow North" (Jay Craven).
Theatre 7: "Fiorile" (†).

19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "Romeo Is Bleeding" (†).
Theatre 2: "Philadelphia" (†).
Theatre 3: "The Piano" (†).
Theatre 4: "Blink" (†).
Theatre 5: Through March 3: "My Girl 2" (†). From March 4: "China Moon" (John Bailey).
Theatre 6: "On Deadly Ground" (Steven Seagal), with Seagal.

Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)
Theatre 1: "Sugar Hill" (Leon Ichaso), with Wesley Snipes and Michael Wright.
Theatre 2: "Blink" (†).
Theatre 3: "Farewell My Concubine" (†).
Theatre 4: Through March 3: "My Father, the Hero" (Steve Miner). From March 4: "Angie" (Martha Coolidge).

34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: Through March 3: "Shadowlands" (Richard Attenborough), with Anthony Hopkins and Debra Winger. From March 4: "China Moon" (John Bailey).
Theatre 2: "The Piano" (†).
Theatre 3: "Blue Chips" (William Friedkin), with Nick Nolte.

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
Through March 3: "The Getaway" (†).
From March 4: "Greedy" (Jonathan Lynn).

Eastside Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"Belle Époque" (Fernando Trueba; in Spanish).

Sutton 1 and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: "My Father, the Hero" (Steve Miner), with Gérard Depardieu.
Theatre 2: Through March 3: "Blank Check" (Rupert Wainwright). From March 4: "China Moon" (John Bailey).

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
Through March 3: "Mrs. Doubtfire" (Chris Columbus), with Robin Williams.
From March 4: "The Chase" (Adam Rifkin).

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"What's Eating Gilbert Grape" (†).

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "Sugar Hill" (Leon Ichaso), with Wesley Snipes and Michael Wright.
Theatre 2: Through March 3: "The Getaway" (†). From March 4: "Greedy" (Jonathan Lynn).

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"I'll Do Anything" (†).

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Midnight Cowboy" (1969, John Schlesinger), with Dustin Hoffman, Jon Voight, and Brenda Vaccaro.
Theatre 2: "Six Degrees of Separation" (†).

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: Through March 3: "8 Seconds" (John G. Avildsen), with Luke Perry. From March 4: "Angie" (Martha Coolidge).
Theatre 2: "Blink" (†).
Theatre 3: "Short Cuts" (†).

First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd. (752-4600)
Theatre 1: "In the Name of the Father" (†).
Theatre 2: "Schindler's List" (†).
Theatre 3: "Schindler's List" (†).
Theatre 4: "Reality Bites" (†).
Theatre 5: Through March 3: "In the Name of the Father" (†). From March 4: "Greedy" (Jonathan Lynn).
Theatre 6: "The Piano" (†).

Gemini 1 and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "On Deadly Ground" (Steven Seagal), with Seagal, Michael Caine, and Joan Chen.
Theatre 2: "Philadelphia" (†).

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"Shadowlands" (Richard Attenborough), with Anthony Hopkins and Debra Winger.

New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "Ace Ventura: Pet Detective" (Tom Shadyac), with Jim Carrey.
Theatre 2: "Blue Chips" (William Friedkin).

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Naked" (Mike Leigh), with David Thewlis.

Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"Silent Tongue" (Sam Shepard).

East 85th Street, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
Through March 3: "Shadowlands" (Richard Attenborough), with Anthony Hopkins and Debra Winger.
From March 4: "China Moon" (John Bailey).

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: Through March 3: "The Getaway" (†). From March 4: "Greedy" (Jonathan Lynn).
Theatre 2: "Sugar Hill" (Leon Ichaso), with Wesley Snipes and Michael Wright.

Orpheum VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (876-2400)
Theatre 1: "Reality Bites" (†).
Theatre 2: "Ace Ventura: Pet Detective" (Tom Shadyac), with Jim Carrey.
Theatre 3: "Philadelphia" (†).
Theatre 4: "On Deadly Ground" (Steven Seagal), with Seagal.
Theatre 5: "I'll Do Anything" (†).
Theatre 6: "Blue Chips" (William Friedkin), with Nick Nolte.
Theatre 7: Through March 3: "My Girl 2" (†). From March 4: "The Chase" (Adam Rifkin).

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: Through March 3: "Blank Check" (Rupert Wainwright). From March 4: "Angie" (Martha Coolidge).
Theatre 2: "My Father, the Hero" (Steve Miner), with Gérard Depardieu.

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Theatre 1: "A Streetcar Named Desire" (1951, directed by Elia Kazan), with Vivien Leigh, Marlon Brando, Karl Malden, and Kim Hunter.
Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.
Theatre 3: "The War Room" (D. A. Pennebaker and Chris Hegedus).

Waverly 1 and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "In the Name of the Father" (†).
Theatre 2: "Six Degrees of Separation" (†).

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "Reality Bites" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Getaway" (†).

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "Paris, France" (Gerard Ciccoritti).
Theatre 2: "The Scent of Green Papaya" (†).
Theatre 3: "Blue" (Krzysztof Kieslowski; in French), with Juliette Binoche.
Theatre 4: "Farewell My Concubine" (†).

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "In the Name of the Father" (†).
Theatre 2: "Ace Ventura: Pet Detective" (Tom Shadyac), with Jim Carrey.
Theatre 3: Through March 3: "In the Name of the Father" (†). From March 4: "Greedy" (Jonathan Lynn).
Theatre 4: "Schindler's List" (†).
Theatre 5: Through March 3: "Schindler's List" (†). From March 4: "Angie" (Martha Coolidge).
Theatre 6: "The Remains of the Day" (†).
Theatre 7: Through March 3: "The Getaway" (†). From March 4: "The Chase" (Adam Rifkin).
Theatre 8: "Reality Bites" (†).
Theatre 9: "Blue Chips" (William Friedkin), with Nick Nolte.

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "Sugar Hill" (Leon Ichaso), with Wesley Snipes and Michael Wright.
Theatre 2: "Mrs. Doubtfire" (Chris Columbus), with Robin Williams and Sally Field.
Theatre 3: "Sugar Hill."

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
Through March 3: "My Father, the Hero" (Steve Miner), with Gérard Depardieu.
From March 4: "Angie" (Martha Coolidge).

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: "Mrs. Doubtfire" (Chris Columbus), with Robin Williams and Sally Field.
Theatre 2: "Short Cuts" (†).
Theatre 3: "Intersection" (Mark Rydell), with Richard Gere, Sharon Stone, and Lolita Davidovich.
Theatre 4: "Farewell My Concubine" (†).
Theatre 5: "The Summer House" (Waris Hussein), with Joan Plowright, Julie Walters, Jeanne Moreau, and Lena Headey.

MOVIE HOUSES-*Cont'd*

Theatre 6: "The Age of Innocence" (Martin Scorsese), with Daniel Day-Lewis, Michelle Pfeiffer, and Winona Ryder.

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"I'll Do Anything" (†).

Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
"Romeo Is Bleeding" (†).

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"The Pelican Brief" (Alan J. Pakula), with Julia Roberts and Denzel Washington.

Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
Theatre 1: "Six Degrees of Separation" (†).
Theatre 2: "Like Water for Chocolate" (Alfonso Arau; a Mexican film, in Spanish).

Angelika 57, 225 W. 57th. (586-1900)
Through March 3: "The Wedding Banquet" (Ang Lee).
From March 4: "Where the Rivers Flow North" (Jay Craven).

Paris, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)
"The Remains of the Day" (†).

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"The Age of Innocence" (Martin Scorsese), with Daniel Day-Lewis, Michelle Pfeiffer, and Winona Ryder.

Columbus Circle, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"My Girl 2" (†).

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
"Reality Bites" (†).

Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "Fiorile" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Scent of Green Papaya" (†).
Theatre 3: "Blue" (Krzysztof Kieslowski; in French), with Juliette Binoche.
Theatre 4: "The Piano" (†).
Theatre 5: "The Snapper" (Stephen Frears).
Theatre 6: "Belle Époque" (Fernando Trueba; in Spanish).

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"Schindler's List" (†).

84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "Philadelphia" (†).
Theatre 2: "Ace Ventura: Pet Detective" (Tom Shadyac), with Jim Carrey.
Theatre 3: "Blue Chips" (William Friedkin), with Nick Nolte.
Theatre 4: Through March 3: "Blink" (†). From March 4: "Angie" (Martha Coolidge).
Theatre 5: "On Deadly Ground" (Steven Seagal), with Seagal.
Theatre 6: "Romeo Is Bleeding" (†).

Thalia, B'way at 95th. (316-4962)
"Short Cuts" (†).

Metro Cinema I and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: "Mrs. Doubtfire" (Chris Columbus), with Robin Williams and Sally Field.
Theatre 2: Through March 3: "Blank Check" (Rupert Wainwright), with Brian Bonsall. From March 4: "Greedy" (Jonathan Lynn).

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: "Sugar Hill" (Leon Ichaso), with Wesley Snipes and Michael Wright.
Theatre 2: "The Getaway" (†).

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "Ace Ventura: Pet Detective" (directed by Tom Shadyac), with Jim Carrey.
Theatre 2: Through March 3: "The Fugitive" (Andrew Davis), with Harrison Ford and Tommy Lee Jones. From March 4: "The Chase" (Adam Rifkin).
Theatre 3: "Reality Bites" (†).
Theatre 4: "On Deadly Ground" (Steven Seagal), with Seagal.
Theatre 5: "On Deadly Ground."
Theatre 6: "Philadelphia" (†).
Theatre 7: "Blink" (†).

Embassy I, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
"Blank Check" (Rupert Wainwright).

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 1: Through March 3: "My Girl 2" (†). From March 4: "China Moon" (John Bailey).
Theatre 2: "Sister Act 2: Back in the Habit" (Bill Duke), with Whoopi Goldberg.
Theatre 3: "Tombstone" (George Cosmatos), with Kurt Russell, Val Kilmer, and Sam Elliott.

Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
"Blue Chips" (William Friedkin), with Nick Nolte.

At the Angelika Film Center, Cyril Collard's "Savage Nights."

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "The Getaway" (†).
Theatre 2: "Sugar Hill" (Leon Ichaso), with Wesley Snipes and Michael Wright.

REVIVAL HOUSES

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Through March 3: "Fog Over Frisco" (†); and "Jimmy the Gent" (1934, directed by Michael Curtiz), with James Cagney.
March 4-5: "Night Nurse" (1931, William Wellman), with Barbara Stanwyck and Clark Gable; and "Ladies They Talk About" (†).
March 6: "Little Caesar" (1930, Mervyn LeRoy), with Edward G. Robinson; and "The Little Giant" (1933, Roy Del Ruth), with Robinson and Mary Astor.
March 7: Two early films by Yasujiro Ozu: "Days of Youth" (1929) and "What Did the Lady Forget?" (1937).
March 8: "I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang" (1932, Mervyn LeRoy), with Paul Muni; and "20,000 Years in Sing Sing" (1933, Michael Curtiz), with Bette Davis and Spencer Tracy.

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
March 2: "What's New Pussycat?" (1965, Clive Donner) and "What's Up, Tiger Lily?" (1966, Woody Allen).
March 3: "Repulsion" (1965, Roman Polanski), with Catherine Deneuve, Ian Hendry, Yvonne Furneaux, and John Fraser; and "Frantic" (1988, Polanski), with Harrison Ford, Betty Buckley, and Emmanuelle Seigner.
March 4-5: "8 ½" (1963, Federico Fellini; in Italian), with Marcello Mastroianni, Anouk Aimée, Sandra Milo, and Claudia Cardinale; and "La Strada" (1954, Fellini; in Italian), with Anthony Quinn, Richard Basehart, and Giulietta Masina.
March 6: "The Women" (1939, George Cukor), with Norma Shearer, Rosalind Russell, Joan Crawford, and Paulette Goddard; and "Dinner at Eight" (1933, Cukor), with Jean Harlow, John Barrymore, Lionel Barrymore, Marie Dressler, and Billie Burke.
March 7: "The Exterminating Angel" (1962, Luis Buñuel; a Mexican film, in Spanish) and "That Obscure Object of Desire" (1977, Buñuel; in French).
March 8: "Fanny and Alexander" (1983, Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish).

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—A program of films starring Jeanne Moreau. March 3 at 2:30 and March 4 at 8: "Eva" (1962, directed by Joseph Losey). . . . March 3 at 6 and March 6 at 12:30: "The Sailor from Gibraltar" (1967, Tony Richardson). . . . March 3 at 8 and March 8 at 2:30: "The Queen Margot" (1953, Jean Dréville; in French). . . . March 4 at 2:30 and March 5 at 5: "The Bride Wore Black" (1968; François Truffaut; in French). . . . March 4 at 6 and March 5 at 2:45: "Bay of the Angels" (†). . . . March 5 at 12:30 and March 8 at 6: "Lumière" (1976, Moreau; in French). . . . March 6 at 2:30 and March 7 at 6: "The Immortal Story" (1966, Orson Welles) and "Lillian Gish" (1983, Moreau). . . . March 6 at 5: "La Notte" (1960, Michelangelo Antonioni; in Italian). . . . March 7 at 2:30: "Mademoiselle" (1965, Richardson). . . . ¶ A program of films produced by Gaumont, the French movie studio. March 4 at 3: "The Red Sweater" (1979, Michel Drach). . . . March 4 at 6: "L'Etat Sauvage" (1978, Francis Girod). . . . March 5 at 2: "Les Vampires, Episodes 1-5" (1915-16, Louis Feuillade; a silent film). . . . March 6 at 2: "Les Vampires, Episodes 6-10.". . . March 7 at 6: "Les Vampires, Episodes 1-3.". . . March 8 at 6: "Les Vampires, Episodes 4-6.". . . ¶ *March 3 at 3 and 6:* Academy Award-nominated foreign-language films.

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. (875-5600)—March 2 at 2, 4, 6, and 8:15 and March 3 at 2, 4, and 9: "Two Friends" (†). . . . ¶ March 3 at 6: "As If It Were Yesterday" (1980, Myriam Abramowicz and Esther Hoffenberg). . . . March 4 at 2, 4:30, 7:05, and 9:40, March 5-6 at 3:30, 6:15, and 9, and March 8 at 2: "Why Has Bodhi-Dharma Left for the East?" (1989, Bae Yong-kuan).

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—Films by Oscar Micheaux. March 6 at 2: "The Girl from Chicago" (1932). . . . March 6 at 4:30: "Murder in Harlem" (1935).

Museum of Television and Radio, 25 W. 52nd St. (621-6800)—"From Kern to Sondheim: American Musical Theatre on Television." Through March 6: "Sweeney Todd" (1985), with George Hearn and Angela Lansbury. Showings Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays at 2:30 and Thursdays at 6. . . . Through March 6: "Into the Woods" (1991), with Bernadette Peters. Showings Wednesdays, Fridays, and Sundays at 2:30. . . . March 4 at 6: "The Colored Museum" (1991).

Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St. (752-0824)—"Pacific Reflections: How Japan and America See Each Other in Film." March 4 at 6:30: "Black Rain" (†).

Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5181)—March 2 and 8 at 5: "Bukowski" (1971, Taylor Hackford). . . . ¶ March 2 at 6, March 5 at noon, and March 8 at 6: "The Bukowski Tapes" (1988, Barbet Schroeder). . . . ¶ March 2 and 8 at 8: "Barfly" (1987, Schroeder), with Mickey Rourke, Faye Dunaway, and Alice Krige. . . . ¶ A program of films by Konrad Wolf. March 4 at 6 and March 5 at 5: "Stars" (1959). . . . March 4 at 8 and March 6 at 7: "Solo Sunny" (1980). . . . March 5 at 5: "Sun Seekers" (1958). . . . March 5-6 at 9: "Goya" (1971). . . . ¶ March 5 at 9 and March 6 at 5: A program of five films by Peggy Ahwesh. . . . ¶ March 6 at noon: "John Cage, Philip Glass, Meredith Monk, Robert Ashley" (Peter Greenaway). . . . ¶ March 6 at 7: A program of films by Dov Lederberg.

DAVE MCKEAN

MOVIES IN BRIEF

FILMS OPENING THIS WEEK

Angie—Martha Coolidge directed and Geena Davis stars in this tale of unwed motherhood in Bensonhurst's Little Italy. With Stephen Rea, Philip Bosco, Aida Turturro, and James Gandolfini. Opening March 4.

The Chase—A tongue-in-cheek road movie about the pursuit—with live media coverage—of an escaped con (Charlie Sheen) who has taken an heiress (Kristy Swanson) hostage and is heading for the Mexican border. With Henry Rollins, Josh Mostel, and Ray Wise. Written and directed by Adam Rifkin. Opening March 4.

China Moon—Film noir in Florida: Ed Harris plays a homicide detective, Madeleine Stowe is the femme fatale, and Charles Dance is her abusive banker husband. Directed by John Bailey. Opening March 4.

Greedy—Kirk Douglas is a wealthy old man whose relatives are competing for his money in this farce, written by Lowell Ganz and Babaloo Mandel. With Michael J. Fox, Nancy Travis, Olivia d'Abo, Ed Begley, Jr., and Phil Hartman. Directed by Jonathan Lynn. Opening March 4.

Sirens—A comedy, set in Australia in the thirties, in which an Anglican priest (Hugh Grant) and his wife (Tara Fitzgerald) are dispatched by the church to confront a painter of provocative nudes (Sam Neill), who co-habits with his wife (Pamela Rabe) and three models (Elle Macpherson, Portia de Rossi, and Kate Fischer). Directed and written by John Duigan. Opening March 4.

Where the River Flows North—In Depression-era Vermont, a back-country logger (Rip Torn) refuses to budge when the construction of a hydroelectric dam threatens to flood his land. With Tantoo Cardinal, Michael J. Fox, and Treat Williams. Directed by Jay Craven. Opening March 4.

CURRENT FILMS

(The following notes are by Anthony Lane, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow. If a movie has been reviewed in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given.)

Blink—Emma Brody (Madeleine Stowe), who plays fiddle in a Chicago band, is sharp, independent, and sexually wise; she is also blind, which in movie code means "vulnerable." And so, after a funny and suggestive start, Michael Apted's thriller slowly goes about its business of turning her into a victim. Emma has her vision restored in an operation, and is immediately rewarded with the sight of a murder suspect. With the villain on her trail, a cop named Hallstrom (Aidan Quinn) is assigned to protect her, a standard setup for falling in love. "Blink" is a dud romance, and it feels pretty ordinary as a thriller. Nevertheless, the movie remains in touch with fascinating feelings: the blind Emma has a kind of enclosed strength that seems to leak away as she adjusts to the visible world. But Apted doesn't give Stowe the space she needs; only in a few scenes, aided by the smart and reliable Laurie Metcalf, does she really open our eyes.—A.L. (Reviewed in our issue of 2/14/94.) (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, Cinema II, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ 84th Street Sixplex; through March 3.)

The Cement Garden—In the most horrible house in England, a concrete cube in a rusty, sweltering wasteland, the miserable teen-age Jack (Andrew Robertson) occasionally takes time off from masturbation to look after his ailing mother (Sinead Cusack). When she dies, he and his sister (Charlotte Gainsbourg) cover her in concrete and stash her in the cellar. Still to come: cross-dressing, poor personal hygiene, and a fistful of incest. Ian McEwan has adapted his own novel—still his most vicious and compact—and hardly changed a word, but the spirit has gone out of it. The director, Andrew Birkin, gives no energy to the dereliction, no kick of horror; the movie is drab and deadly from the first scene. It's solemn, controlled, and oddly unshocking; the one big surprise is Gainsbourg's flawless British accent.—A.L. (Angelika Film Center.)

Farewell My Concubine—Chen Kaige's film is a big, eventful historical soap opera of the "Doctor Zhivago" school. The movie follows a pair of male Beijing Opera performers, Cheng Dieyi (Leslie Cheung) and Duan Xiaolou (Zhang Fengyi), from their school days, in the nineteen-twenties and early thirties, to their farewell performance together, in 1977. Chen keeps the action charging forward breathlessly, for more than two and a half hours, and at a certain point you begin to realize that the obvious theatre-versus-life ironies are only a small part of what the movie is about. The real subject is whether it's possible, in times that demand perpetual revolutions in values, to remain true to anyone or anything: an art, an ideal, a friend, a wife, oneself. In Mandarin.—T.R. (10/11/93) (Murray Hill Cinemas, Quad Cinema, and Worldwide Cinemas.)

Fiorile—The new movie by Paolo and Vittorio Taviani is a family saga that, according to the filmmakers, is based on legends they heard while they were growing up in Tuscany. The picture, spanning two hundred years, tells the story of the Benedettis (who are sometimes referred to by the locals as the Maledettis). The Benedettis begin as peasants and become wealthy landowners, but their prosperity and power derive from an original sin, committed in the seventeen-nineties, for which future generations have never received full absolution. The screenplay, by the Tavianis and Sandro Petraglia, is constructed as a series of historical tales framed by a contemporary story in which members of the three surviving generations of the Benedettis illustrate, in various ways, the consequences of their blighted family history. Although the movie is elegantly made and has moments of great beauty, it somehow falls short of delivering the tremendous emotional impact that it promises. The three legends we're told about the family aren't extraordinary in themselves, and the thematic structure—the whole saga comes down to a parable about love versus greed—is disappointingly banal. In Italian.—T.R. (2/7/94) (Village East Cinemas, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

The Getaway—Roger Donaldson's remake of the 1972 Sam Peckinpah movie, which starred Steve McQueen and Ali MacGraw as husband-and-wife criminals on the lam, is so smoothly efficient that it makes the original's slickness and crassness look touchingly primitive. What's infuriating about the new movie is that Donaldson and his screenwriters, Walter Hill and Amy Jones, don't make the slightest effort to find a fresh perspective on the material. Alec Baldwin is very skillful, but this remake is so unmistakably still a Steve McQueen picture that he looks at times as if he had been superimposed on the film by some computer trickery in the editing room. (And Kim Basinger, too, is hampered by the script's fidelity to the 1972 movie.) The original was a big hit, and the filmmakers aren't about to mess with a proven commodity. Donaldson's version is craftsmanlike yet smug: it makes you feel nostalgia for the less pristine crumminess of bygone trash. Based on a novel by Jim Thompson.—T.R. (2/21/94) (Art Greenwich Twin, Olympia, and National Twin. . . . ¶ 34th St. East, Manhattan Twin, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and Chelsea Cinemas; through March 3.)

I'll Do Anything—Written and directed by James L. Brooks, this movie started life as a musical comedy and wound up as an extreme oddity. The music was dropped along the way, and you can't help feeling that some of the jokes never made it, either. Nick Nolte stars as Matt Hobbs, a not-in-demand actor who hangs around Los Angeles looking for

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work and tends to the unflagging demands of his young daughter (Whittni Wright), whose own road to stardom is less bumpy. This domestic saga takes up most of the plot, leaving other love stories—a wounded romance between Burke (Albert Brooks) and Nan (Julie Kavner), and Matt's courting of a movie executive named Cathy (Joely Richardson)—patchy and undeveloped. There are sunny moments here, alive with nimble shifts of feeling, but the director won't let the mood grow; he prefers to score angry points against the movie industry, as he did with television in "Broadcast News." Once again, however, he ends up falling for the cheap ethic that he wants to condemn; the climactic scene, in which Wright weeps on cue for a live audience, features more hugging than Christmas Day at the White House.—A.L. (2/28/94) (59th Street East Cinema, Orpheum VII, and Ziegfeld. . . . ¶ Village Theatre VII; through March 3.)

In the Name of the Father—Jim Sheridan's ragged, fascinating new movie is based on the autobiography of Gerry Conlon, a Belfast Catholic who spent nearly fifteen years in British prisons for a crime he didn't commit. Conlon (Daniel Day-Lewis) and three friends were accused of participating in the 1974 bombing of a pub near London, in which five people were killed; the only evidence against Conlon was his own confession, extracted from him by means of a brutal police interrogation. When Sheridan and his co-screenwriter, Terry George, try to function as historians, the movie feels shaky. But when Gerry and his father (Pete Postlethwaite)—who has been convicted on a different charge—get to prison, the filmmakers begin to explore their real theme, which is the intimate emotional consequences of oppression and prejudice. Day-Lewis, Postlethwaite, and Don Baker (playing a chillingly self-possessed I.R.A. man) are superb. Also with Emma Thompson and Corin Redgrave.—T.R. (1/24/94) (First & 62nd Cinemas, Waverly and Chelsea Cinemas.)

My Girl 2—Topic: "Young adult" movies are neither young nor adult. (Talk amongst yourselves.) In this one, the road to self-knowledge contains wide paved shoulders, blatant signposts, and only a few minor bumps and detours; it makes the original "My Girl" look like "The Member of the Wedding." The sequel is set in 1974, when the offbeat heroine, Vada Sultenfuss (Anna Chlumsky), is thirteen—old enough to leave her mortician father (Dan Aykroyd) and his second wife (Jamie Lee Curtis) for a brief trip from Pennsylvania to L.A. in search of stories about her mother, who died bearing Vada. She stays with Uncle Phil (Richard Masur), his employer-lover Rose (Christine Ebersole), and Rose's son Nick (Austin O'Brien) long enough to cast her spell on the boy and to see the grownups get properly engaged. Naturally, she discovers that Mom was a true individualist. The cast is appealing, but the screenwriter, Janet Kovalcik ("Married to It"), displays her unerring knack for stranding the audience in a limbo between humor and domestic pathos, while Howard Zieff (who did "My Girl") directs as if energy would detract from the valuable lessons.—M.S. (Columbus Circle. . . . ¶ 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Embassy; through March 3.)

Philadelphia—Tom Hanks plays a lawyer dismissed from his firm, apparently for incompetence, but really because he has AIDS. Enter Denzel Washington as a personal-injury attorney—relaxed, witty, and homophobic, but prepared to fight for justice. The result is an unorthodox blend of courtroom drama and old-style weepie, and somehow it comes off. With Jonathan Demme in charge there's a guarantee of taste and skill—if anything, the movie is too optimistic, convinced that everyone in America can be won round to its own standards of tolerance. Of course it should stand up for gay rights, but do we also need a speech about how wonderful lawyers are? Fortunately, this preachiness never swamps the picture, thanks largely to spirited playing from Tom Hanks, who looks full of life right up to the end. The movie is affecting, sometimes silly, but determined to take risks.—A.L. (12/27/93-1/3/94) (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, Gemini, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

The Piano—Sometime in the last century, a Scottish mute called Ada (Holly Hunter) travels to New Zealand with her beloved piano and her daughter Flora (Anna Paquin). She is engaged to Stewart (Sam Neill), but it is his right-hand man, Baines (Harvey Keitel), who becomes the focus of her interest. He buys the piano, and gives her a chance to win it back: an erotic agreement that gathers intensity and drives the film onward to its gasping conclusion. The writer and director, Jane Campion, has turned her native New Zealand, with its desolate beaches and writhing forests, into a potent backdrop; the rain and mud make the love story look like trench warfare—you come away from the movie battered and amazed. It's almost too wrought and compressed for its own good, but the performances breathe it full of life. Hunter, especially, gives a fiery portrait of a rebellious Victorian spirit.—A.L. (11/29/93) (Angelika Film Center, 19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Reality Bites—With Winona Ryder, Ethan Hawke, and Ben Stiller; directed by Stiller. (Reviewed in this issue.) (First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, 62nd & Broadway, and Criterion Center.)

The Remains of the Day—Anthony Hopkins plays Stevens, a butler who has given long and faithful service at Darlington Hall and maintained his emotional temperature at absolute zero. This has cost him dearly: first, he failed to see that his master (James Fox) was dangerously bent on appeasement with the Germans in the nineteen-thirties; and, second, he refused to accept, or even acknowledge, the love offered to him by the housekeeper (Emma Thompson). Adapted by Ruth Prawer Jhabvala from the novel by Kazuo Ishiguro, this Merchant-Ivory production strains so hard to portray dignified restraint that it almost seizes up with good manners. This is especially unfair to Thompson, who is forced to smother her naturally high spirits.—A.L. (11/15/93) (Village Theatre VII, Chelsea Cinemas, and Paris.)

Romeo Is Bleeding—The writer and co-producer, Hilary Henkin, proves that a female moviemaker can be brutal and derivative, too. At the center of this arty melodrama are a sorry doofus of a crooked New York cop (Gary Oldman), his ditzy mistress (Juliette Lewis), his fed-up wife (Annabella Sciorra), and the vicious femme fatale (Lena Olin) who costs him everything. Henkin and the director, Peter Medak, imagine they can revive film noir by halving an antihero's I.Q. and kinking up his sex life. The audience is supposed to take this witless film as black comedy simply because the evil is bottomless and the characterizations are over the top. With Roy Scheider as Mob boss Don Falcone.—M.S. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 19th Street East 6, Festival, and 84th Street Sixplex.)

Savage Nights—This is the story of Jean, a young French bisexual filmmaker with AIDS, caught between the opposing charms of Laura (Romane Bohringer) and Samy (Carlos López). He is played by Cyril Collard, a young French bisexual filmmaker with AIDS, who also directed the movie and wrote the screenplay, based on his own original novel. The personal intensity of the project, sadly, does not end there: Collard died in March, 1993, three days after his work won four César awards, including the prize for best film. Bearing this in mind, it is hard to confront the film with a clear eye, but what one sees is vigorous, wordy, and broken-backed. For those who who found "Philadelphia" too kindly and sanitized, the emotional dirt of "Savage Nights" will come as a relief; when Laura learns of Jean's condition, she throws a fit and then takes off his condom, wanting to prove her love with perilous sex. It's that old French refrain, the dark poetry of the death wish, and the best scenes consist simply of the hero gunning his red sports car through the night. But the movie disintegrates badly, and loses force; the characters seem not so much to be living through their experiences as using them to strike a philosophical pose. When Laura starts confiding her thoughts to Jean's answering machine, you, too, will be longing for the end. In French.—A.L. (Angelika Film Center.)

The Scent of Green Papaya—Vietnam's first Academy Award nominee for best foreign film offers an easy-to-resist blend of indoor nature chronicle (it could be subtitled "The Insects and Reptiles of Saigon") and bittersweet remembrance. The writer-director, Tran Anh Hung, has a visual idea or two; in prolonged, gliding tracking shots he traces the progress of a provincial girl named Mui, who works for a deceptively comfortable Saigon family and then for an eligible composer. When the camera skates through homes as neat and geometric as dioramas, it makes viewers feel as if they were on a moving sidewalk at a World's Fair exhibition about South Vietnam before the fall. The result is a kind of 3-D calligraphy rather than dramatic moviemaking. In Vietnamese.—M.S. (Quad Cinema, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Maribel Verdú in "Belle Époque."

FRANCIS LIVINGSTON

Schindler's List—The story of Oskar Schindler (Liam Neeson), a dashing and resourceful German Catholic businessman who saved over a thousand Polish Jews from almost certain annihilation by the Nazis, is extraordinary even by the standards of Holocaust literature. Steven Spielberg's film, adapted by Steven Zaillian from the 1982 book by Thomas Keneally, runs better than three hours and doesn't seem a minute too long. Spielberg respects the essential mystery of the protagonist's heroism, and uses his prodigious skills with an intensity that he hasn't shown in a long time: he captures images of experiences that most of us thought we would never see represented adequately on the screen. This is by far the finest, fullest dramatic (i.e. nondocumentary) film ever made about the Holocaust. With Ralph Fiennes, Ben Kingsley, and Embeth Davidtz. The wonderfully expressive black-and-white cinematography is by Janusz Kaminski.—T.R. (12/20/93) (First & 62nd Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, and Regency.)

Short Cuts—Robert Altman uses nine short stories by Raymond Carver as the raw material for a latter-day "Nashville," set in Southern California. (One story line—by far the weakest—is the invention of Altman and his co-screenwriter, Frank Barhydt.) Most of the stories in the three-hour-and-seven-minute movie are about misunderstandings—often outright hostilities—between men and women, and the juxtaposition of all these poisonous domestic relationships has the effect of turning Carver's closely observed, scrupulously specific small dramas into a big, obvious generalization about men's brutality and women's capacity for endurance. Despite Altman's exquisite control of pace, the movie seems thin and insubstantial, and every moment feels pretty much like every other.—T.R. (9/27/93) (Village East Cinemas, Cinema 3rd Avenue, Worldwide Cinemas, and Thalia.)

Six Degrees of Separation—Fred Schepisi's film of John Guare's brilliant play about affluent, liberal-seeming New Yorkers who are conned by a young, gay black man claiming to be the son of Sidney Poitier. It's as agile and as inventive a visualization of complex theatrical material as you'll ever see. Guare's script (which sticks close to the text of the play) is a virtuoso comedy of upper-middle-class Manhattan manners, and the writing is amazingly nimble and unpredictable. His subject is the possibility, and the necessity, of seeing the world through someone else's eyes. The odd empathy that develops between the privileged heroine, Ouisa (Stockard Channing), and the young hustler (Will Smith) is moving because it emerges, unexpectedly, out of their radically different—but equally ingenious—strategies for manipulating experience. Their cleverness, like Guare's, ultimately transcends itself. Schepisi's direction keeps the movie charging forward, driven by its locomotive wit, until near the end, when we find ourselves set down in a huge and thrillingly unfamiliar emotional landscape, hardly knowing how we got there. It's a wonderful ride.—T.R. (Coronet, Waverly, and Carnegie Hall Cinema.)

What's Eating Gilbert Grape—The small-town setting is Endora, Iowa; the hero (Johnny Depp) is a grocery clerk who can't endure it. He and his two sisters (Laura Harrington and Mary Kate Schellhardt) are stuck there while they take care of a morbidly obese mother who won't leave the house (Darlene Cates) and a mentally challenged brother named Arnie (Leonardo DiCaprio). The director, Lasse Hallström, aims for a tragicomic fable that says a rut is as deep as you make it; he tries to be sensitive without being boring. But the film is still implicitly condescending since almost all the characters (including the afflicted ones) function as tests of Gilbert's patience. John C. Reilly and Crispin Glover (as Gilbert's buddies) contribute affable comic turns, but the exuberant, inventive DiCaprio is the only one who transcends the flatness of the storytelling. With Juliette Lewis and Mary Steenburgen. Peter Hedges adapted his own novel.—M.S. (Village Theatre VII, and Plaza.)

REVIVALS

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Michael Sragow.)

Bay of the Angels (1962)—What would this film be like without Jeanne Moreau? Even if the dialogue and direction were the same, the meanings wouldn't be. The picture is almost an emanation of Moreau, and is inconceivable without her. Written and directed by Jacques Demy, it's rather like a French attempt to purify, to get to the essence of, a Warners movie of the thirties. Demy not only gets to it, he goes beyond it. His virtuoso sense of film rhythm turns this flimsy, capricious story about a gambling lady into a lyrical study in compulsion and luck. The concept of gambling as almost total spontaneity and irresponsibility—as giving in to chance (as if that were the most complete acceptance of life)—is oddly suggestive, and we begin, in this film, to feel its appeal, to feel that gambling is a bum's existentialism. And Jeanne Moreau, in a very Bette Davis sort of way, dramatizes herself superbly. This is a magical, whirling little film, a triumph of style, even though it runs down to nothing in the last, too quick, too ambiguous shot. Photographed, in dazzling sunlight, by Jean Rabier, and with one of Michel Legrand's best scores. In French.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; March 4-5.)

Black Rain (1989)—Michael Douglas and Andy Garcia play New York cops who land in the middle of a crime war in Osaka. They're thrown into a partnership with Japanese police detective Ken Takakura, who teaches them a thing or two about group honor and loyalty, while they teach him a thing or two about individuality and guts. The movie might have worked as vaudeville—the Craig Bolotin–Warren Lewis script hands Douglas the oldest macho routines in the Western world. But the director, Ridley Scott, gives a ponderous buildup to every gruesome act of violence. Boredom is the main course, blood the dessert. With Kate Capshaw as a cynical night-club dame, and Yusaku Matsuda as a creepy villain whose sociopathic quirks supposedly illustrate the psychological fallout of the A-bomb.—M.S (Japan Society; March 4.)

Fog Over Frisco (1934)—One of the routine Warners gangster pictures that Bette Davis was tossed into. She's a dissolute heiress, out for thrills; her socializing with the Mob lands her, at last, curled up in a rumble seat, nastily dead. It moves along but everything is stamped "synthetic," and there's time wasted on Donald Woods as a smart-aleck reporter with deadline troubles. Davis gives it that nervy flash of hers; she doesn't get much help from the likes of prissy-voiced Margaret Lindsay, or from Lyle Talbot, either. Directed by William Dieterle, from Robert N. Lee's script, based on a novel by George Dyer.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; through March 3.)

Ladies They Talk About (1933)—The racier elements of this "women behind bars" movie (made just before the censorious Production Code was enforced) include a cigar-smoking lesbian and a jolly ex-madam who cracks jokes about having run a "beauty parlor." Its one artistic distinction is Barbara Stanwyck's typically robust and varied performance as a beautiful moll who flirts with the idea of going straight. Stanwyck delivers her tough-gal lines with panache while conveying flickering shades of passion or insincerity; she makes an impression, if not a complete character. With Preston S. Foster, Lyle Talbot, and Lillian Roth. Directed by Howard Bretherton and William Keighley; adapted by Brown Holmes, William McGrath, and Sidney Sutherland, from a play by Dorothy Mackaye and Carlton Miles.—M.S. (Film Forum 2; March 4-5.)

Two Friends (1986)—One viewer cracked, " 'The Breakfast Club' meets 'Betrayal,' " and that's just about the truth. Depicting how two teenagers drift apart largely because of one teen's troubles at home, the director, Jane Campion, displays some sensitivity to the shifting chemistry of friendship and to inarticulate communication. But the only twist to the story is that it's told backward. It resembles an after-school special, and, in fact, was produced as a Sunday-night movie for Australian TV.—M.S. (Walter Reade Theatre; March 2-3.)

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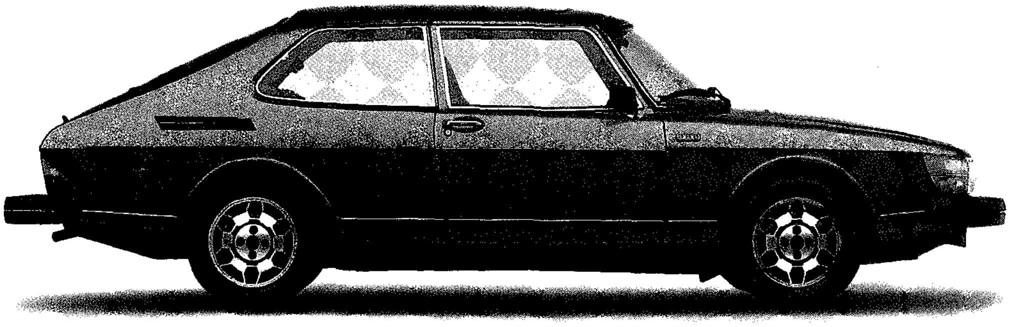

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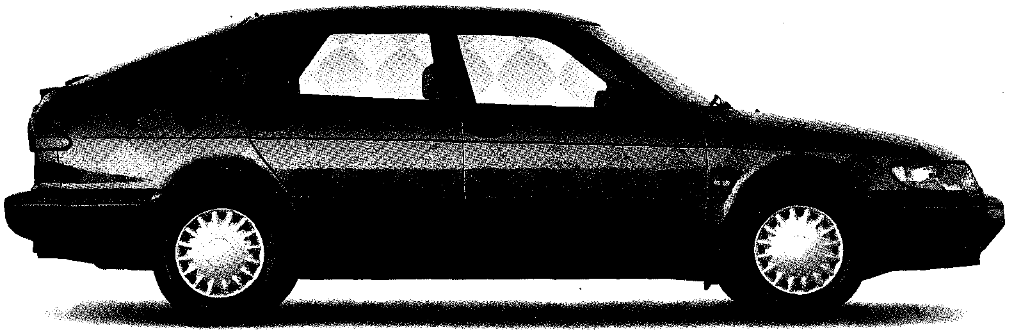

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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

A TRIAL THAT HAS BEEN, WELL, SOMETHING OF A TRIAL

It was lunchtime last Tuesday in the cluttered pressroom of the Federal Courthouse, and a heated debate—or, rather, a heating debate—had broken out over the World Trade Center bombing trial. Patricia Cohen, of *Newsday*, went right to the heart of things. "It's brutal in there," she said. She was referring not, exactly, to the atmosphere of the big courtroom on the third floor where the trial has been going on for nearly five months but to its temperature, which tends toward the chilly. "I think he"—United States District Judge Kevin Duffy, who is presiding over the trial—"keeps the window open to keep everybody awake."

Staying awake in the courtroom has been trying, and not only for the spectators and the members of the jury, who began deliberating the case late last Wednesday. Even Judge Duffy is said to have drifted off once. "We can't say for sure that he was sleeping," Ms. Cohen said, sitting at her desk and maintaining the objectivity of a seasoned newspaper reporter. "But we do know that his eyes were closed and that he did not respond until he was touched by a court officer."

Ms. Cohen has been in court nearly every day of the trial, and she has remained awake through it all—thanks in part, perhaps, to a John le Carré novel she has had with her now and then. The *Times* has had a reporter there each day, too—Richard Bernstein, mostly—and so have the Voice of America and the Cable News Network, and these journalists have also remained alert, though not without effort. Despite the fact that the case involves—to quote from Mr. Bernstein's article in the *Times* of February 24th—"what law-enforcement officials have called the worst terrorist incident ever to take place on American soil," the trial has turned out to be the big story that wasn't. Even last week, with closing arguments being made and the jury instructed, a number of those covering the trial were having a difficult time getting their editors interested. After the lunch break Tuesday, while Charles Feldman, the CNN correspondent, was sitting in the courtroom listening to the prosecutor finish his rebuttal, CNN's field producer for the trial tapped him on the shoulder and whispered, "You've got a minute, maybe a minute and a half for your piece."

"I can't do it in a minute," Mr. Feldman said, protesting. "Tell them I've got to have at least two minutes."

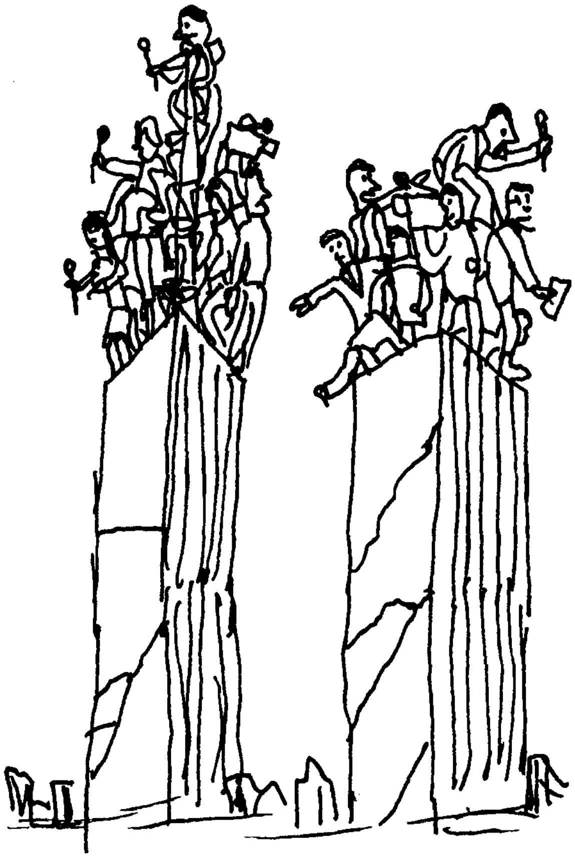
"Maybe you should tell them," the producer replied.

Earlier, in the pressroom, Ms. Cohen had said, "I do think it's been a boring trial. It's been heavily forensic. The first four weeks, it was a bunch of metal."

Eleanor Randolph, who has covered the trial for the Washington *Post*, said, "It was impossible for us"—she meant the *Post*—"to cover it every day. I mean, in the beginning they'd spend endless hours examining a part of an undercarriage."

Richard Bernstein had a rather loftier take on the prosecution's decision to call two hundred and seven witnesses and present a thousand and three exhibits. "This was a case that had to be proved in the way that they proved the existence of subatomic particles," he said. "Nobody has ever seen them. The evidence is all circumstantial."

It was the consensus among the journalists covering the trial that the prosecution had made



ILLUSTRATIONS BY GARY PANTER

"I MARRIED A PINBALL MACHINE!"
By Lou Brooks
MY STORY OPENS AT THE PARK CENTRAL HOTEL DURING THE RECENT PROFESSIONAL & AMATEUR PINBALL ASSN. CHAMPIONSHIPS!
I NOTICED RIGHT AWAY THAT THE COMPETITION WAS INTENSE!!
GET BACK BEHIND ME, I TELL YOU!
?
(PERIPHERAL VISION)
THERE WERE OVER 600 ENTRANTS FROM 25 STATES AND 5 COUNTRIES!
FOR A WEEKEND, GOTHAM BECAME PINBALLVILLE!
OVERHEARD
OH, M
G.....!

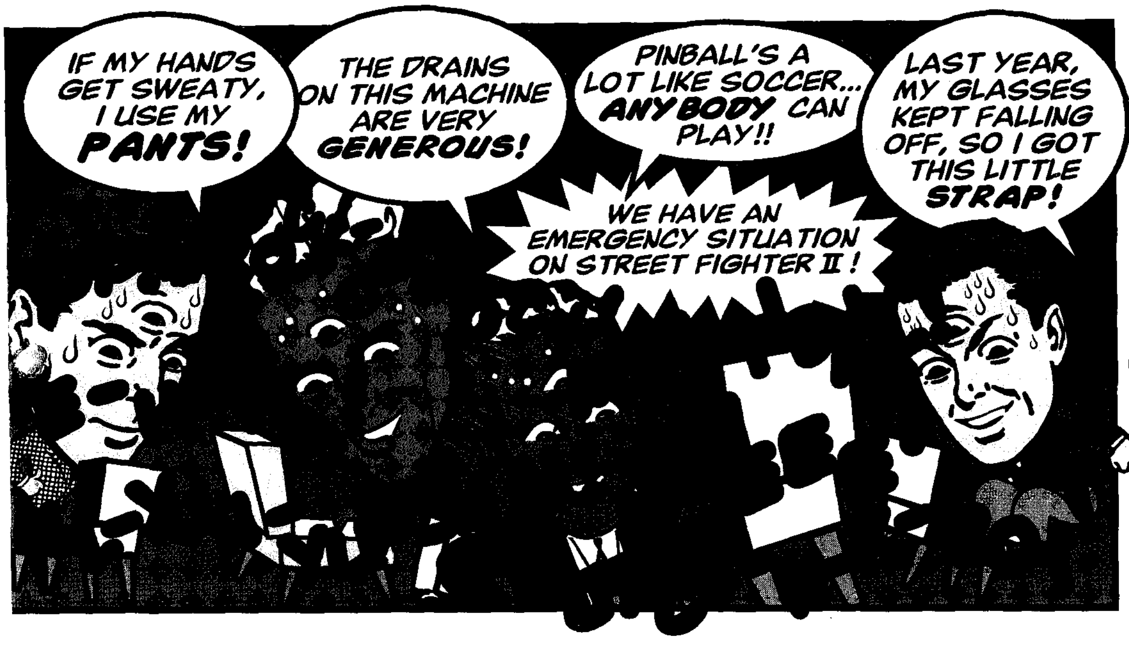
their jobs—that is, their chances of covering an exciting story—more difficult by leaking most of the evidence to news organizations ahead of time. As Mr. Feldman sees it, the government, through the use of leaks, tried the case in the press—and won a conviction from the public—before the actual trial got under way. "The proof of how well they leaked is that very little that's come out of the trial has been surprising," he said. "I can only think of one piece of evidence—a fingerprint on a parking ticket—that we didn't already know about. And we later learned that the *government* didn't know about it until the trial began."

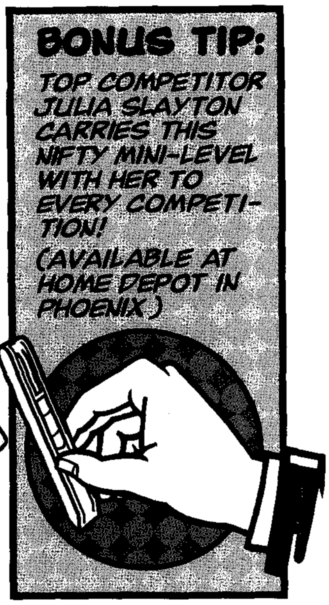
None of the reporters would say how *they* would vote were they jurors in the case. Nor would any of them say how they thought the jury—which has the task of determining the guilt or innocence of four men accused of carrying out the Trade Center bombing and of criminal conspiracy—would vote. But, as is the custom at big trials, the reporters have organized a kind of office pool, with Ms. Cohen as its treasurer. The stakes in the trial are high: six people were killed and more than a thousand were injured as a result of the blast, and the defendants, if convicted, face life sentences. The stakes in the pool are not: the reporters have wagered a dollar apiece on what verdict the jury will return and how long it will stay out. Last Tuesday, Ms. Cohen was still mulling over her own prediction, and neither Mr. Bernstein nor Mr. Feldman would say what his bet was. And the Reuters reporter, Jeanne King—she had one of the trial's bigger scoops when she reported that one of the defendants, Mohammad Salameh, objected to the way he was portrayed in his lawyer's summation—was not betting at all. "I never vote," she said. "I don't think it's right. We're supposed to be impartial observers."

CURTIS SLIWA, LIVE!

"THERE is always going to be the impression that Curtis Sliwa is a houseboy for Rudy Giuliani," Curtis Sliwa said. This was Curtis Sliwa talking frankly. Or, as he might say, this was Curtis Sliwa going toe to toe with the truth. At any rate, this was Mr. Sliwa, sitting at a dilapidated desk the other afternoon in the offices of WNYC-AM—one of two city-owned radio stations—before going on the air to host, as he has done five days a week since February 16th, "New York Beat," a three-hour, live-broadcast talk show. And, for sure, this was Mr. Sliwa shrugging off the fact that he'd been an outspoken supporter of Rudolph Giuliani in the fall campaign; that on January 14th, during the last broadcast of the not-quite-popular-enough talk show that he (with his wife, Lisa) had hosted since April of 1991 on WABC, Mr. Giuliani said in an on-air phone conversation with Mr. Sliwa that there might be a slot for him on WNYC; that Larry Orfaly, the managing director of WNYC Radio, solicited a proposal for a show from Mr. Sliwa; that before the AM station awarded Mr. Sliwa the afternoon slot he met with—and discussed the show with—William Diamond, the commissioner of the Department of General Services. (The D.G.S. holds the station's broadcast license.) No, all this, at worst, was merely the *appearance* of patronage.

"They were very hostile," Mr. Sliwa said. "I needed an asbestos suit." This was Mr. Sliwa talking frankly about how the WNYC Radio staff greeted his arrival. There was anger, to judge from a letter signed by members of the staff and sent to Tom Morgan, the president of the WNYC Communications Group, which oversees the operation of the city's public-television station as well as WNYC-AM and FM. "Why does this hire have to be rushed through?" the letter read. "Is there pressure from the Giuliani Administration on any level to consider hiring him? . . . Are normal


IF MY HANDS GET SWEATY, I USE MY PANTS!
THE DRAINS ON THIS MACHINE ARE VERY GENEROUS!
PINBALL'S A LOT LIKE SOCCER... ANYBODY CAN PLAY!!
WE HAVE AN EMERGENCY SITUATION ON STREET FIGHTER II!
LAST YEAR, MY GLASSES KEPT FALLING OFF, SO I GOT THIS LITTLE STRAP!


BONUS TIP:
TOP COMPETITOR JULIA SLAYTON CARRIES THIS NIFTY MINI-LEVEL WITH HER TO EVERY COMPETITION!
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hiring procedures being carried out?"

"But then I'm used to feeling like a hemorrhoid in a red beret," Mr. Sliwa said. This was Mr. Sliwa referring, at least in part, to the signature headgear of the Guardian Angels, the controversial crime-watch group he founded fifteen years ago.

"It's O.K.—I'm a survivor, rough and tough," Mr. Sliwa said. This was Mr. Sliwa, who is thirty-nine, and has flecks of gray in his hair, saying that things had been worse; for instance, in June of 1992, when he was shot—"I took three bullets that left five holes"—and, later that year, when it came out that he had faked crimes, including his own kidnapping, in order to generate publicity.

A walkie-talkie squawked on the desk, and Mr. Sliwa cocked an ear for his Angels code name, Angel One, but it didn't come on. Then he poked through some files he'd brought with him from WABC in four milk crates—files labelled "Drugs," "Death Penalty," "Fascists," "Ice-T," "Rodents." Outside, it was snowing, and Mr. Sliwa said, "On a day like today, my programming sense says go with the weather. Because this is No. 13, ka-pow, right on the kisser." This was Mr. Sliwa keeping count of the season's storms. "So we're going to talk to a sanitation man, we're going to talk to a former homeless person—real people, not union officials. We're coming from a different angle—the way they think in the tenements and the projects. See, WNYC is Park Slope, Brooklyn Heights, Manhattan, Riverdale, Forest Hills—the sons and daughters of the working class who've moved up, gotten away from their roots." This was Mr. Sliwa talking conservative populism—a commercial-radio talk-show staple. The two shows that had to be rescheduled to make room for his show—National Public Radio's "Talk of the Nation" and "Fresh Air with Terry Gross"—are not conservative-populist shows, and get listened to in places like Park Slope, Brooklyn Heights, Manhattan. . . .

Mr. Sliwa put on his red beret, draped a brown towel around his neck, like a fighter—"to sop up the sweat" from an attack of the flu, he said—and charged into the booth to do his show. At two o'clock, Jo Ann Allen began reading the news: "A most unwelcome guest is paying a visit to New York this afternoon." She was talking about the snowstorm, but in the control room Amy Pearl, the producer of "New York Beat," slyly murmured, "Curtis Sliwa."

Mr. Sliwa's job is tough, Ms. Pearl went on to say, as Mr. Sliwa began talking his on-air talk. "The challenge is reconciling his personality—a bombastic, straight-talking, conservative populist who's got his hands in every paint pot in the borough—with this station. The WNYC audience"—she made a la-di-da face. "Well, I screen calls here, and the people say, 'Curtis makes me sick!' and 'He can't speak the Queen's English' and 'What's next, Howard Stern?' WNYC is, like, if they're going to do a program on hate, they go and read the latest book on hate and talk in-depth about how it affects people in the workplace, or whatever. Whereas, Curtis is visceral: 'The *hate* . . . is . . . *bad.*' " She had his Canarsie inflections down pat.

TOYS ARE THEM

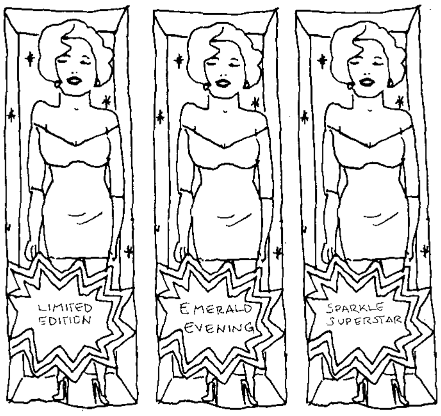
"WOULD you like to meet our seventeen-year-old vice-president of marketing?" the woman from Catco, Inc., asked us. What she meant was "Would you like to meet our Seventeen-Year-Old Vice-President of Marketing™?" Because the fact is that Mary Rodas, the vice-president in question, is now eighteen years old. You can see why Catco hangs on to the concept, though. A vice-president of marketing who can't vote is more stirring than a vice-president of marketing who can.

Actually, Mary could probably pass for thirteen, her age when she first became a Catco executive. Catco is a toy company. Mary is about five Barbies tall, and her voice occupies a band of the electromagnetic spectrum which is seldom used for human communication. "Hello. Cool," she chirped when she was introduced to us, last week, at the American International Toy Fair, the toy industry's gargantuan annual trade show, which for ten days filled two entire buildings on Fifth Avenue and much of the Javits Center. Mary, whom we met at 200 Fifth Avenue, in what industry people call the Toy Center, makes two hundred thousand dollars a year, and she rides to high school in a limousine. Catco's most famous product is Balzac, a heavy-cotton bag that becomes a ball when you inflate a balloon inside it. (It comes in several sizes, with balls ranging from four inches in diameter to three feet.) Mary gave us six Balzacs, several bags of cotton-candy-flavored jelly beans, and five containers of a somewhat sickening type of candy glop called Glop. She also showed us the Deco Disc, which is a thick cardboard greeting card that contains a compact disk.

"At first, you don't know what it is," she said of the Deco Disc, handing us half a dozen samples. "The great thing is that you can step on it." She dropped one on the floor, turned to a young woman, and said, "Stacey, could you step on this for me?" Stacey, who works for Catco but is not a vice-president, jumped on the Deco Disc, then handed it back to Mary, and Mary put it in a CD player. Mary fumbled with the controls, and a radio station came on. "Oh, I forgot to shift it. Duh!" When she found the right button, we heard a song sung by someone named Jason Carson, who is said to sound like Elvis. "See? It works!" Mary was beaming. "So that's pretty cool!"

There were fifteen hundred exhibits at the Toy Fair, and since we couldn't hope to see them all, we decided the best approach was to choose a theme. Our theme: toy companies with terrible names. We didn't have to wander far from Catco to find the Uneeda Doll Company, Inc.

"Somebody made a gross mistake years ago," Bob Sklarsky, who is the chairman of Uneeda's board, told us. "In fact, it was my father. He came up with the name in 1917. Believe it or not, he was sued by the Uneeda Biscuit company, and a judge issued a temporary restraining order. But what they found was that my father had come up with the name first." Sklarsky has complicated, expensive-looking glasses and a wry sense of humor. When he introduced his publicist, an attractive young woman, he said, "She's been elected to carry on the company after I'm gone." Then the two of them showed us some stuffed animals, a category of toy which is known in the industry as plush.



"Ploosh," Sklarsky said.

"Ploosh," the publicist said.

"That's what the German buyers call it," Sklarsky said. "Ploosh. Ploosh." He picked up a stuffed monkey and inserted his hands in openings in its sides. "My father invented this in the twenties," he said. "See? It's a muff."

"Ploosh muff," the publicist said.

"Ploosh *mooff.*"

"Ploosh mooff. Ploosh mooff."

At an exhibit a few doors away from Uneeda's, we found the toy company with the most terrible name: Diversified Specialists, Inc. Tommy Moss, a great big man who is the company's founder, told us, "We're diversified to do anything we want to. We're specialists in making money."

DSI's hottest product is a limited-edition, eleven-and-a-half-inch vinyl Marilyn Monroe doll. It is the only fashion doll ever to be endorsed by Marilyn's estate. Robert Greenberg, who is DSI's vice-president of product development, showed it to us. "You've heard Jung talk about the collective unconscious of a nation," he said. "The toy business is like that. Marilyn is a part of America's collective unconscious. 'Happy Birthday, Mr. President.' The dress flipping up. Even her tragic death."

The doll, which is to sell for about forty dollars, comes in six versions: Emerald Evening Marilyn, Sparkle Superstar Marilyn, Spotlight Splendor Marilyn, Diamond Dazzle Marilyn, Spectacular Showgirl Marilyn, and Fur Fantasy Marilyn. Every Marilyn has expensive Italian hair, a beauty mark, and a certificate of authenticity. And wait! There's a special collectors' edition Marilyn, too, and it comes with a *talking* certificate. "Press the lips," Greenberg said, handing us one of the certificates. We pressed a hot-pink lipstick print on the certificate—a hot-pink lipstick print that is virtually embossed on our collective unconscious—and a tiny electronic voice vouched for the authenticity of the Marilyn.

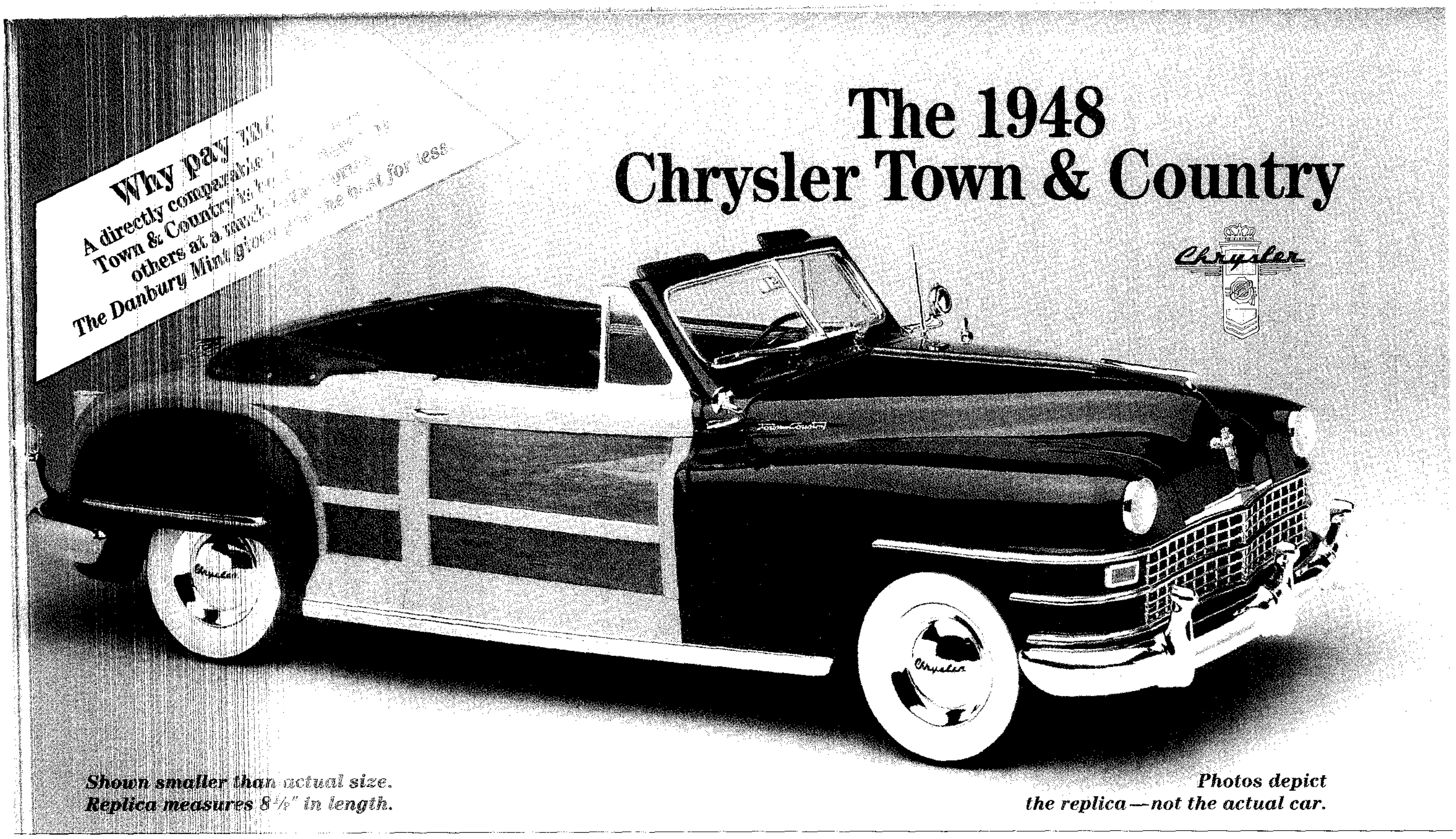
AROMACHOLOGY (AN EXTRACT)

THE aromachologists have smelled our moment, and it does not smell good. Anthony Leardi, the vice-president for fragrance applications of Takasago USA, and one of four featured speakers at a recent seminar held at the Waldorf-Astoria that was entitled "Aromachology Enters the Mainstream: A Global Perspective," declared that discontent is in the air. "It has been proved that odor can affect moods," Mr. Leardi said. "We can better modern life by tapping the emotions through the most basic sense: the sense of smell."

Aromachologists believe that exposure to certain scents can produce psychologically beneficial results, and that such results can be quantified. To this end, the Olfactory Research Fund, an arm of the not-for-profit Fragrance Foundation, has been supporting aromachology experiments for the past twelve years. One study cited at the Waldorf seminar, which was sponsored by the fund, was done at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center: it found that releasing a vanilla-like fragrance under the nose of a patient who is undergoing an M.R.I. scan helps the patient to relax. Also cited was an experiment performed by two professors in the Psychology Department of the University of Cincinnati: they found that exposing people whose work entails "sustained attention tasks"—assembly-line workers, for example—to "occasional whiffs of peppermint and muguet" results in increased alertness and improved performance.

Someday, according to Annette Green, the president of the Fragrance Foundation, "sensory-fulfillment centers" will be established in public spaces, so people can breeze in for a quick pick-me-up. Someday, cities will develop "odor maps" to identify "problem areas." If the aromachologists are right, then someday, as on most days, the future will smell rosier. ♦

The 1948 Chrysler Town & Country


Why pay [illegible]
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Chrysler

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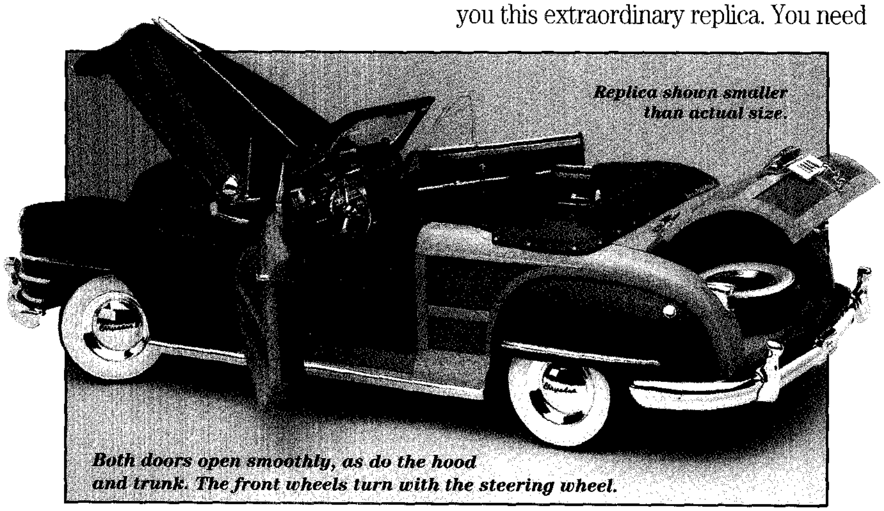

Replica shown smaller than actual size.

Both doors open smoothly, as do the hood and trunk. The front wheels turn with the steering wheel.

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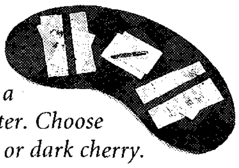

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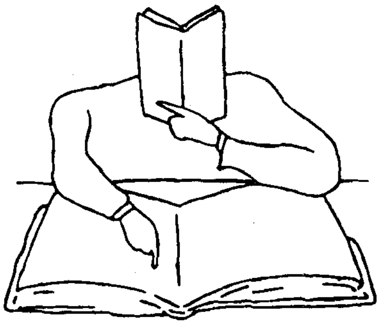

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ANNALS OF LAW

THE MAN WHO KEPT GOING FREE

Before he killed Polly Klaas, Richard Allen Davis was the classic offender the system couldn't hold in jail. Now he's the argument for "three strikes."

BY JEFFREY TOOBIN

At about ten-thirty on the night of October 1, 1993, a stranger walked through an unlocked back door into a small two-bedroom bungalow in Petaluma, California. In one bedroom, twelve-year-old Polly Klaas was having a slumber party with her friends Gillian and Kate. In the other, Polly's mother, Eve Nichol, and six-year-old half sister, Annie Nichol, were sleeping. The stranger—tall, bearded, and carrying a knife—asked which of the girls lived in the house. Polly answered that she did. The stranger then bound the three girls' hands behind their backs and covered their heads with pillowcases. He asked about the valuables in the house but did not take any. He took Polly.

In the effort to locate and save Polly, the city of Petaluma, which has a population of forty-five thousand, rallied as no other community had before to solve a crime. Hundreds of volunteers put in thousands of hours searching fields and sending out almost ten million flyers bearing photographs of Polly and sketches of her abductor. Their efforts yielded nothing. Then, on November 30th—two months after Polly was kidnapped—a thirty-nine-year-old man named Richard Allen Davis was arrested for violating the terms of his parole. On December 4th, Davis confessed to the abduction and murder of Polly Klaas and that same day led investigators to Polly's body: it was buried under plywood on an empty lot in Cloverdale, about fifty miles north of Petaluma.

The outlines of Davis's life quickly became known around the country. He had started committing crimes before he left high school and had accelerated his lawbreaking in later years. He had served three stretches in state prison, two for kidnapping. Of the last twenty years, he had spent fourteen behind bars. If, as many studies have shown, a relatively small number of criminals are responsible for most violent crime in the United States, Davis had long been a member of that company. Nevertheless, he had been released on parole three months before he abducted Polly.

In a flash, the chase was on to pin the blame for Davis's release, and thus Polly's death, on a negligent parole board, a softhearted judge, an incompetent police officer, or even an especially cunning criminal. But what makes the Davis case so troubling—what elevates it beyond random calamity—is that his crime cannot be explained by the mistake of any one person. Indeed, in Davis's long march through the criminal-justice system nearly everyone he encountered recognized him as the incorrigible felon he was. Davis himself never tried to convince anyone otherwise; candor, not cunning, was the hallmark of his dealings with the authorities. Over the years, he confessed to dozens of crimes, many of them previously unknown to the police. Virtually every time, prosecutors went after him, judges threw the book at him, and parole boards, when they could, denied him parole. And still he went free.

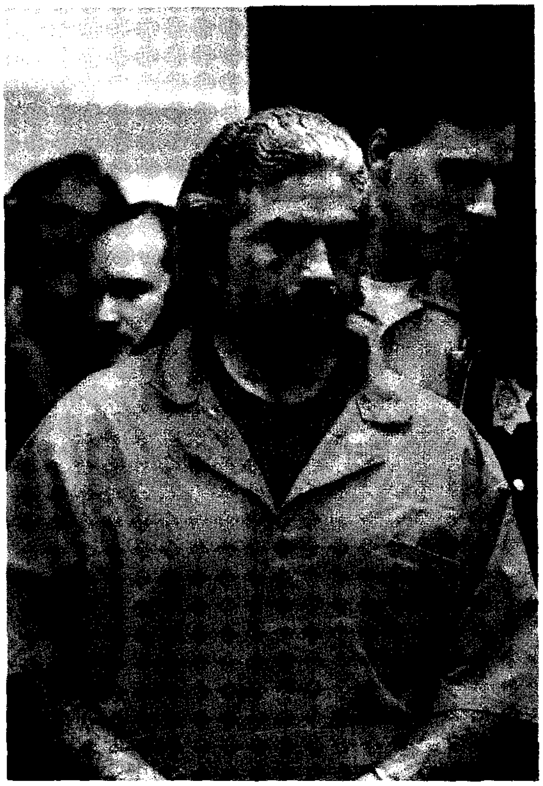
It turns out that the blame for Davis's release lies more with the penal system than with the people who tried to make it work. Well-intentioned reforms of the last two decades created a host of new problems and loopholes. For instance, legislators angered by the early parole of some prison inmates began setting ever more specific sentences for crimes. But in doing so they mandated that all those convicted of the same crime receive more or less the same sentence, and thus they deprived judges of the license to give extraordinary defendants extraordinary punishment. In the light of Polly Klaas's murder, California and many other states, and the federal government as well, are poised to approve some version of a proposal known as "three strikes and you're out," which would establish life sentences for any individuals who have been convicted of three violent felonies. The Klaas case, whether through "three strikes" (in one of its many forms) or some similar measure, may well be the catalyst that allows judges presented with the likes of a Richard Allen Davis to regain the opportunity to do what common sense bids: keep them inside.

As the country was drawn to Polly Klaas's story, her life took on an almost mythological dimension. Because her abduction symbolized everything that was wrong with America, she was said to represent all that was right. *People* anointed her "America's Child." Her story seemed to require that everything about her life be flawless, to match the endlessly reproduced seventh-grade school photograph of an apple-cheeked beauty. Ironically, it has turned out that Polly Klaas truly *was* America's child. Her young life was marked by divorce, family discord, and dislocation—an American family as C-SPAN might portray it. "You know, a lot of the publicity about Polly since she was taken was that she led this perfect life," her aunt and close friend Elizabeth Klaas said. "But she didn't. Polly dealt with a lot."

Polly Hannah Klaas was born on January 3, 1981, in Children's Hospital in San Francisco, two and a half years before her parents' marriage dissolved. Her mother soon married a man named Allan Nichol, and Marc Klaas, her father, began living with Violet Cheer, whom he now refers to as his "endless, long-term fiancée." Nichol had three children from a previous marriage—two much older than Polly and one, Jessica, almost precisely her age. "Polly and Jessica lived together from the time they were both three, and Polly loved her," Marc Klaas said. "They were friends as much as sisters. And she loved Annie"—born in 1987, to Eve and Allan Nichol—"as she would any little sister." Polly spent most vacations with her father, who managed a Hertz rent-a-car franchise in San Francisco's Fairmont Hotel. "Eve and I did not have a successful marriage," Marc Klaas said, "but we did have a successful divorce."

BEN MARGOT/AP PHOTO

The happy stew of steps and halfs, however, did not always include Polly's relationship with her stepfather. "Polly tried to please her mom, but she'd stand up to Allan," her Aunt Elizabeth said. "And when one of the other kids would do the same thing Allan would say, 'You're pulling a Polly.' " Nichol, who is an architect, had uneven success in California, and the family made frequent moves. In fact, Polly lived only briefly in the town she came to symbolize. By the age of twelve, she had lived all over Northern California, with stints in Fairfax, Bodega Bay, Santa Rosa, and Sebastopol.



Davis: Prosecutors went after him, judges threw the book at him, parole boards, when they could, denied him parole. And still he went free.

Eve and Allan Nichol separated in 1992, and it was then that Polly moved to Petaluma, with her mother and half sister. She flourished. "Polly was just starting her second year in the same school system, and that meant a lot to her. She loved it there," Elizabeth Klaas said. "Still, she was insecure about a lot of things. She thought her stepsister Jessica was so much smarter and prettier than she was, so she decided to do something that no one in the family had done—perform. She played the clarinet and was accepted into the advanced band at the junior high school. And she started to act in the community theatre, and she sang in a children's choir in Santa Rosa."

Yet, as last fall began, Polly's contentment was precarious. Her mother planned to leave her job as a manager for Biobottoms, a mail-order retailer of children's clothes in Petaluma, and was looking for jobs as far away as Monterey, south of San Francisco. She was also in the process of reconciling with Allan, a prospect that, according to Marc and Elizabeth Klaas, upset Polly, partly because there was talk of moving the family to Idaho. "Eve was really leaning on Polly, relying on her to care for Annie a lot of the time," Elizabeth said. "And Polly did it. Polly was just trying to help, to hold things together. That's what she did. I mean, the last words anyone ever heard Polly say were what she said to Richard Allen Davis as he was kidnapping her, leading her out of the house: 'Please don't wake up my mother.' "

If Polly Klaas's background reflected the struggling mainstream of American life, Richard Allen Davis's was stamped from a different template—that of the classic American sociopath. He was born on June 2, 1954, in San Francisco, to Robert R. Davis and the former Evelyn McGuire. The third of five children—three boys and two girls—Rick Davis was reared, a probation report later stated, in a "chaotic and unsatisfactory home situation." His parents were divorced when he was eleven, and Rick's father, a longshoreman, obtained custody of all five children, "because of the mother's alleged immoral conduct in the presence of the children." The precise nature of the conduct was not specified, but other reports noted that Mrs. Davis was an alcoholic. So was Mr. Davis. Rick and his siblings "were moved back and forth between both homes and between maternal and paternal grandparents," it was reported. He appears to have lived at various times in various cities and towns south of San Francisco—South San Francisco, Chowchilla, and Redwood City—but he spent most of his time in the village of La Honda, where his father had opened a small trailer park. His father died in 1992. Davis's mother now lives in Petaluma.

Since Polly's murder, Davis has been widely portrayed as a crafty manipulator of judges and prosecutors, but in truth he rarely tried to hide who he was or what he did. Throughout his criminal history, Davis did not so much seek out special deals as glide along on whatever fate handed him. Indeed, it seems that Davis went out of his way to alienate people who might have helped him. Once, after beating a woman with a poker he said to a probation officer that he saw "nothing wrong with his behavior and would change it if he did."

Even during Davis's teen-age years, his character was no secret in La Honda. "Everyone feared him," Ruth Baron, whose son was a contemporary of his, said. "He was just terribly intimidating. You'd look at him and those eyes would speak to you—evil. He did an awful lot of cruel things to animals. He would douse cats with gasoline and set them on fire. He made a point of letting people know that he carried a knife, and he used to find stray dogs and cut them up." Pat Fluharty, a logger and a lifelong resident of La Honda, told me, "This is a pretty unique community, and people kind of leave each other alone, but that guy was just a punk kid, always in trouble. Once, he stole this guy's new car. Now, the town probably had only about three or four hundred people in those days, and Rick is joyriding the thing, so everyone knows he took it. Then, of course, he wrecks the car, and the owner beat the crap out of him." His father had a similar reputation. "He was pretty wacko, too, a pretty strange person," Fluharty said of Bob Davis. "He packed a gun all the time, and sometimes at night he'd go outside and shoot at hallucinations." Ruth Baron recalled Rick's having to bail his father out of the local drunk tank.

Before Rick Davis left high school—he never graduated—he developed what he himself later called a compulsion for crime. In 1977, he gave a court-appointed psychiatrist "an elaborate description of the insidious development of what he called 'tensions' that began when he was in the seventh grade. At that time he was involved in a theft which netted him three checks, and he became excited while cashing these three checks." He told another psychiatrist that he "started his criminal career at about age twelve. Burglary, forgery and stealing from a mailbox were his early crimes and even then were accompanied by a feeling of 'glowing' and tension release." An early probation report said, "The citizens of La Honda are very upset over the defendant and his involvement in numerous residential burglaries and thefts in their area." It was widely observed that Davis needed some discipline. When he was seventeen, a judge gave him a choice between joining the Army or being committed to the California Youth Authority, which was a kind of residential reform school.

Davis chose the Army, but his military career, which he spent largely as a truck driver in Germany, was a failure. He talked about his service record in a tape-recorded interview with Lane Jay Liroff, a deputy district attorney from Santa Clara County, in 1990. Davis, who was in prison at the time, had sought out the meeting in the hope of incriminating a former girlfriend who had spurned him. In the course of his freewheeling exchange with Liroff, he spoke casually about his involvement in a number of crimes, including several for which he could, at that point, have been prosecuted. When Liroff asks if he has ever shot drugs, Davis answers, "I get tattoos, but I don't shoot no drugs, you know. Straight up, I mean, I'm all covered with tattoos." Then Davis pauses and corrects himself. "I did that in the Army—when I was in the Army. I had to go in the Army when I was seventeen. It was either that or go in Y.A. It was '71, they shipped me to Germany. I left here and hash was four dollars a gram, and I get to Germany and it's sixty cents a gram. So I go wild. I start getting loaded like a motherfucker—hash, coke, opium, and shooting morphine. Then, uh, then I got kicked out. So I learned my lesson from that. I never shot any drugs since."

Davis returned to La Honda after a thirteen-month military career, and his local crimes resumed. On October 12, 1973, he attended a small party at the home of Marlene Voris, whom he called his girlfriend. "Just a day or two before the party, Marlene had received a commission in the Navy that she had desperately wanted and the party was partly a celebration," Ruth Baron recalled. "At the end of the party, everyone left together, but Rick said he had to go back. He went back to the house, and a few minutes later there was a gunshot." Police investigating the scene found seven suicide notes and decided that she had killed herself. Davis later told a court psychiatrist that Voris committed suicide "almost in his presence," and that "this upset him profoundly." Yet doubts about the case lingered in the community. "As far as I'm concerned, Rick held the gun on her and forced her to write those notes," Baron said. "Then he killed her." Fluharty, who also knew Voris, said, "Nobody believed she committed suicide. She was all happy that night. No way she killed herself." (In the light of Davis's arrest in the Klaas case, local police reopened, then closed again, the investigation into Voris's death. Sergeant Ray Richardson, of the San Mateo County sheriff's office, who interviewed Davis after his arrest in the Klaas case, said that Davis now asserts that he was at a neighbor's home at the time Voris shot herself, and that he and another friend discovered the body. The neighbor corroborated Davis's statement about the discovery of the body. Richardson went on to say, "Voris had been drinking heavily and was giving her property away—something people who are contemplating suicide do. The notes were in her handwriting. We don't have any evidence that it was other than a suicide.")

Davis found sporadic employment in this period, as a gas-station attendant and as a logger, but he seems to have supported himself principally by breaking into houses. A week after Voris's death, a weekend resident of La Honda informed the police that some power tools were missing from his home and, according to a subsequent police report, that "someone had apparently slept in his bed" and "consumed all of his alcoholic beverages." Police soon learned that Davis had tried to raise money on the missing items from various nearby pawnshops. When police officers confronted him, he admitted that he had been burglarizing homes in the area.

Davis had by then been arrested numerous times for petty offenses—a minor in possession of liquor, possession of marijuana, public drunkenness. ("He had apparently urinated in his pants and was extremely dirty," one police report noted.) He was prosecuted for the 1973 La Honda burglaries, but, because he had spent almost six months in the county jail before he came up for sentencing, he received only probation and time served.

On May 13, 1974, a mere five weeks after Davis was released on probation—during that period he had met with his probation officer seven times—he was caught trying to burglarize South San Francisco High School. This time, he would unquestionably go to prison. His probation officer, David Mandel, asked him what he thought about the prospect. Davis "had three major objections to being incarcerated," Mandel wrote. "The foremost of these was that he could not 'get loaded,' meaning smoke marijuana or use other drugs. He also indicated that there was 'not enough room to walk around' and that 'it's boring.' " Davis pleaded guilty to felony burglary and, at age twenty-one, received his first sentence to state prison: six months to fifteen years.

The sentence reflected the fact that at that time in California—as in much of the rest of the country—sentencing was an unspecific art. Since approximately 1900, convicts had received "indeterminate" sentences—broad ranges of time that they might serve. Parole boards decided precisely when inmates would be released. That system was actually on its way out when Davis received his sentence. "By the nineteen-seventies, there was an odd convergence of different political agendas against indeterminate sentencing," Robert Weisberg, a criminal-law professor at Stanford, told me. "The parole board was viewed by the left sixties culture as arbitrary and capricious—and intellectually, if not politically, corrupt. Conservatives saw the other side, that inmates were not serving their full sentences, and pointed to the stories about parolees who got out and did something terrible." The answer, both liberals and conservatives agreed, was "determinate" sentencing: a specific crime would merit a specific sentence, and the parole board would have nothing to say about it. Davis,

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however, was as yet unaffected by the new trend. The parole board, in a typical proceeding, considered his relative youth and the nonviolent nature of his offenses and granted him parole after he had served one year.

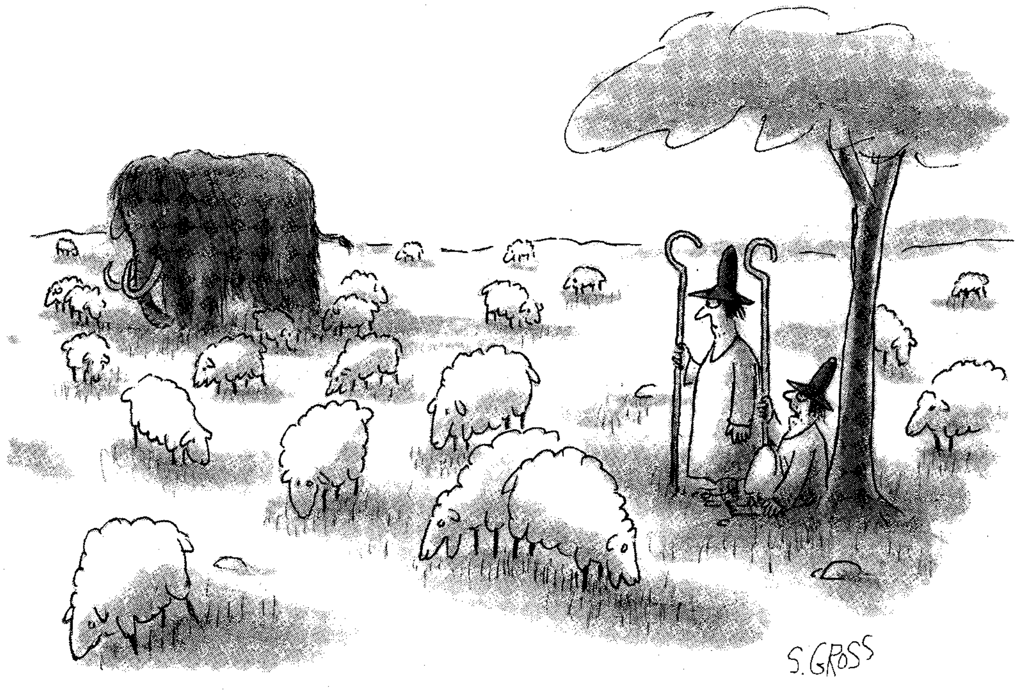
EVEN in hindsight, it is possible to see why Davis was considered a small-timer—a thief but not an especially dangerous or violent criminal. Prison had given him a year away from the drugs that plagued him in the military and the temptations that he had succumbed to in La Honda. He was only twenty-two years old. He would now reveal whether he was a kid with a mixed-up past or a hard-core criminal.

On the evening of September 24, 1976, seven weeks after his release from prison, Davis crossed paths with Frances Mays, a twenty-six-year-old legal secretary, as she was returning home, on the Bay Area Rapid Transit system, to the San Francisco suburb of Hayward. "It was about six or six-thirty, still light out, and I was heading out of the BART station to the parking lot," Mays told me recently. "I remember as I was walking to my car I checked behind me to see if anyone was following me, and no one was. But just after I opened the door to my car I turned around and there was someone behind me with a knife at my back. He told me to get in and slide over to the passenger side. He took the keys and asked how he could get out of the parking lot without being seen. I told him, and we drove away. I was crying, hysterical, and he told me to shut up, and hit me. Then I offered him my wallet, and he put it in his pocket. I started to calm down and talk to him, and he told me that he had just got out of prison and that someone was following him and he had to get away. Then he just pulled off into this deserted area and stopped the car. At that point, he exposed himself and said, 'I'm going to count to three—you know what I want you to do.' All these thoughts are going through my mind. I was wondering if I was ever going to see my husband again. So I just . . . I just grabbed the knife, right on the blade, and held it with my left hand while I tried to unlock the door with my right. I managed to hold the knife still long enough to get out, and I started screaming at a car that was going by." The car that Mays managed to flag down was that of Jim Wentz, a California Highway Patrol officer, who was driving to work with his wife. Wentz drew his gun and arrested Davis.

Davis later told a court psychiatrist that at the BART station he had felt a buildup of "tensions" and that, when he saw Mays, he "had the feeling that she wanted something done to her." He explained further, to another psychiatrist, that he had heard a voice in his head "wondering what it was like to be raped," and had decided to wait at the BART station to see whose voice it was. Davis said he believed that the voice belonged to Mays and, as the psychiatrist reported it, he "proceeded to enter her car and tried to force sex on her." The psychiatrist added, "He insists that the woman really wanted this and was only protesting for the sake of appearances."

While Davis was being held in a local jail on charges of abducting Frances Mays, he tried to hang himself in his cell and, as a result, was sent to Napa State Hospital for evaluation. But on December 16th he escaped from the hospital and went on a five-day rampage. That night, he broke into the house, in Napa, of a thirty-two-year-old woman named Marjorie Arlington and, while she slept, smashed her on the head with a fireplace poker. When Arlington awoke, screaming, he calmly walked out of her house. A day later, Davis broke into the Napa County Animal Shelter and stole a shotgun, ammunition, and drugs. In the early-morning hours of December 20th, he accosted Marie Ellis, who was returning to her car in the parking lot of a bar. Just after she stepped into the car, Davis held the shotgun to her neck and demanded that she drive him to Santa Rosa. But before they could leave the parking lot, Davis demanded that Ellis stop at a pay telephone there. She did, and while he was pulling some tape out of his pocket in order to tie her up she fled. The next day, Davis made his way home to La Honda, about seventy miles south of Napa. There he broke into an unoccupied house and took clothing and jewelry worth about a thousand dollars. Police investigating the burglary found Davis lying down beside a nearby fence, in an attempt to hide. He was holding the shotgun taken from the animal shelter. Davis admitted to investigators that he had broken in, intending to "clean the whole house out." As usual, he expressed no remorse. "Everybody does it—some just don't get caught," he said.

Davis was charged in connection with his criminal binge, he followed his pattern, and this time the people he alienated who



"As long as it's woolly I don't ask questions."

might have helped him included a judge. "Well, Mr. Davis, you're going to prison," Judge Alan W. Haverty, of San Mateo Superior Court, said to him at the time of sentencing. "You know that as well as I do. But you make one statement in here that kind of troubles me."

"What's that?" Davis asked.

"Well, I'd only ask you if you told the probation officer this . . . that you express no remorse over your attempt in this matter and that, to the contrary, you indicate to the officer that you consider the activity all right. Do you believe that? Or did you say that, first of all?"

"I just told her that if I felt bad about it I wouldn't have done it," Davis answered.

"You don't—it doesn't bother you at all?" asked the Judge.

"No," Davis replied. "If it did I wouldn't have done it."

A probation officer wrote of Davis at the time, "This man should be removed from the community. His propensity for crime, and what appears to be an accelerating potential for violence, dictates a prison commitment."

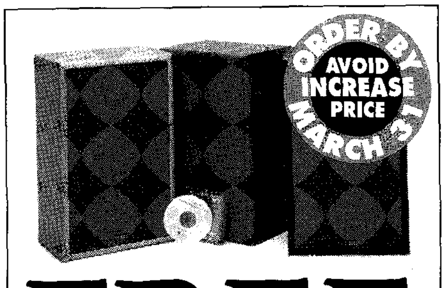
Although determinate sentencing became law shortly after Davis's crime spree, a transitional arrangement meant that he was sentenced under the old system. The ranges he received demonstrate just how wide the possibilities were: one to twenty-five years for kidnapping Frances Mays in Hayward; two years to life for the two assaults in Napa (with an extra five years to life for using a firearm); and six months to ten years for receiving stolen property in La Honda. How long Davis would actually serve, however, was decided under the new law, and that, paradoxically, worked to his advantage. "In this period, we recalculated all the leftover indeterminate sentences according to what people would have got under the determinate law," Ted Rich, the executive officer of the California Board of Prison Terms, told me. The new determinate sentences were modelled on "average" sentences, which tended to be closer to the low end of the old indeterminate ranges. "Under the old system, he could have been kept in toward the high end of all his sentences. But now we had to give a specific number of months to every inmate. And the board gave Davis the maximum it could under the law—seventy-two months, or six years. So he got no break, but he might have done more under the old system."

Davis, who remained eligible for parole, came up for parole six times during this term. The board rejected him as unfit each time. But since the law dictated that he serve no more than six years, he was released on March 4, 1982.

THEN, it appears, Richard Allen Davis fell in love. Shortly after he was released, he met Sue Edwards at St. James Infirmary, a well-known bar in Mountain View, not far from La Honda. When they met, Davis told the prosecutor Lane Liroff in 1990, Edwards was dealing drugs—specifically, "crank," an amphetamine related to speed. But Edwards' relationship with her drug suppliers was troubled, and Davis intervened. "These guys wanted her to do something," Davis told Liroff, "and she didn't want to be no longer involved, so I had to step in. So my presence . . ." He let the thought linger. "And they kind of backed off."

Photographs of Sue Edwards from this period show a plump woman with flowing bleached-blond hair. Born in 1961, she looked much older than a woman in her early twenties. Her lawyer, the former Representative Pete McCloskey, said, "She's what you call a 'motorcycle mama.'" When she met Davis, she was married to a man named William Edwards and had two young sons, but the marriage was unstable, and soon the kids were with their father, and Davis and Sue Edwards hit the road together. Theirs was, as Liroff described it to me, "a Bonnie and Clyde existence." For about three years, they rambled around Northern California, Oregon, and Washington, stealing and selling drugs to make ends meet. Sometimes, Davis told Liroff, they would settle somewhere for thirty days—"so we could get on welfare"—but would soon go on to the next town.

Now that Davis was with Edwards, though his crimes did not cease, his style changed. There were no more random assaults, like the one on Frances Mays. Rather, crime became an occupation. Davis was now a robber—of stores, restaurants, and banks. On November 30, 1984, he and Edwards robbed someone they knew: Selina Varich, who had been the roommate and lover of Edwards' sister Nancy two years earlier. Sue



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Edwards had stayed with them on occasion but had never stayed very long, because, Varich later told investigators, "she's always been sort of a vagabond, so she was just packed up and gone wherever, you know."

That day, Sue Edwards and Rick Davis banged on Varich's door in Redwood City, where Varich had moved after breaking up with Nancy. "They were hollering at me," Varich recounted, "saying things like 'You're going to listen to us now, because if you don't we're going to kill your daughter, your father, and yourself—all three of you.' " Edwards ripped the phone out of the wall, and Davis drew a gun. Varich started screaming and made a run for the door. "I had just got to the door and got the door open and they were on me," she said. Davis slammed the gun into her face. "They were telling me that if I didn't stop screaming and struggling they were going to shoot me." Her blood "was splattering everywhere," she said. After they calmed Varich down, they demanded that she withdraw six thousand dollars from the bank and give it to them. Varich went to her bank with Edwards, withdrew the money, and handed it over.

Having assaulted someone who could identify them, Edwards and Davis knew they had to leave the area, so they headed up to Washington. "We started running short on money," Davis told Liroff later. They stopped for a while in the small city of Kennewick. "We're at the laundromat. I told her to get some quarters for the laundromat, so she splits, comes back, and tells me, 'You know, I was just up at this bank up there and, you know, they didn't have no cameras.' I said, 'Are you serious?' She said, 'Yeah.' So I took a few dollars and went to get some quarters there, to check it out. So I drove up there and looked in—no cameras. So I came back and said, 'Yeah.' So she says, 'Well, we need some money, right? Do you think you could do it?' I said, 'I ain't never been robbing no bank.' But she said, 'Well?' So I said, 'Yeah, we could probably do it, but what are we going to do for a gun? When I go in there and say, "Gimme all your money," I mean, what am I gonna do?' "

At this point, as Davis told Liroff, Edwards had an inspiration. She remembered that friends nearby owned a pellet gun that looked like a .45. "Sue said, 'If I got you that, could you use that?' I said, 'Yeah, all they need is something to see. . . .' So I asked her, 'How are we going to get it?' She said, 'We'll go over there, smoke some weed. You smoke some weed with them out in the living room, and I'll go in the kitchen and get it.' So we got it." On the day they robbed the bank, making off with about four thousand dollars, it was snowing. "We heard sirens and all. I told her, 'Man, the sirens,' and she started laughing. I said 'What's so funny,' and she said, 'The cops are trying to get here, but it was snowing so much that they're fishtailing.' And we're in a four-wheel-drive with chains on the tires!" Davis laughed. "I thought, Hell, this is working pretty good!"

To keep the pair afloat, Davis robbed more stores and at least one more bank. In a chilling precursor of the Klaas case, Davis told Liroff, laughing, "Each time I do something, the drawing keeps coming out in the paper and it's beginning to look more and more like me." He told Sue, "Pretty soon your friends are going to look at the newspaper and look at me." In the Klaas case, the police called in Jean Boylan, a top sketch artist, to interview Polly's two friends from the slumber party. The resulting sketch bore an almost eerie resemblance to Davis. But in no case did a sketch lead to Davis's arrest.

The strain of life on the road eventually grew too much for Sue Edwards. After taking some crank, Sue "got on a bus, started getting paranoid, thought the bus was full of detectives that Selina had hired," Davis said. "Bus ends up pulling into Klamath Falls, Oregon, and just as it's ready to pull back on the freeway, she runs up to the front and tells the driver to stop and jumps off the bus—at four o'clock in the morning. So *the bus driver is thinking,* What the fuck is this broad doing, you know? Here it's starting to snow, so he calls the cops." After hiding out for a few days, Sue hitched a ride with a truck driver. "They're talking on the CB about some crazy broad jumping off the bus the other night. She's hearing this and thinking they're right behind the truck somewhere." Eventually, she rejoined Davis, who was more philosophical about the prospect of getting caught. "If the cops are out there, they're gonna be there, man," he said he told Sue. "Don't sweat it, you know? If they get us, they get us."

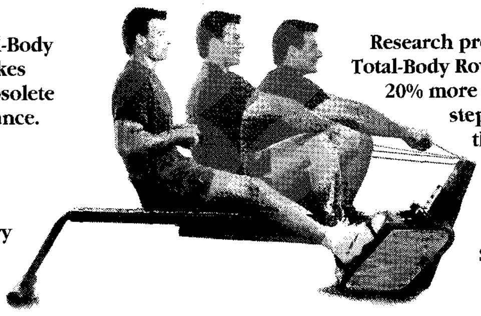
Their spree ended in a predictably banal way. On March 21, 1985, a police officer in Modesto pulled their pickup truck over because of a defective tail-light. The police ran a check on them and discovered the outstanding warrants for the kidnapping and robbery of Selina Varich. After their identities were revealed, Edwards warned the officers about Davis. According to the arresting officer's report, she said that Davis "would be very upset and might be very mean due to the fact that he knew that he might be looking at life in prison."

Edwards was wrong, if understandably so. Under the old, indeterminate sentencing, Davis might have received a life sentence (though he might have served far less); if "three strikes" had been law, the Varich crime would have been Davis's third strike and, under most of the current proposals, would also have earned a life sentence. But under the determinate law then in effect each of the crimes that Davis had committed had a prescribed term, and they did not add up to life. Convicted of kidnapping and robbing Varich, Davis was sentenced to sixteen years in prison. "The whole purpose of the determinate law was to make sure that the parole board's discretion was somewhat limited," Ted Rich, of the Board of Prison Terms, said. Under the determinate law, the legislature, rather than the parole board, established the fairly narrow range in which a judge's sentence might fall. "Here the judge gave Davis the maximum he could under the kidnapping and robbery guidelines," Rich said. "He no longer had the option of giving him life. Sixteen was the max."

The police never pursued Davis aggressively on the other crimes he had committed during his time with Edwards, which lasted approximately from 1982 to 1985. In fact, it is unclear when, if ever, the local authorities tied him to all the crimes he described in his 1990 interview with Liroff. Davis did also plead guilty to an attempted robbery committed in Modesto in 1985, but he received a three-year term that was to be served concurrently with his other, longer sentence. "Our hands were tied, to a certain extent," Charles McKenna, a prosecutor in the Modesto case, told me.

Davis spent the bulk of this prison term, which began on August 8, 1985, at the state's biggest prison, the California Men's Colony (C.M.C.), in San Luis Obispo. Despite its genteel name, and a splendid location, in the middle of the Santa Lucia Range, C.M.C. is the last stop for many of the state's worst criminals. The part of the prison in which Davis lived had about thirty-five hundred inmates, and almost a third of them were doing life sentences.

On a recent visit to C.M.C., I spoke to about a dozen inmates who claimed to have known Davis during his time there. Some of them seemed to be making things up—new conversation partners are in short supply in prison—but others painted a familiar portrait. "Quiet," they said, and "Weird." An inmate named Nicholas Trujillo told me, apparently referring to the attempted sexual assault on Frances Mays, "People knew he was a sex offender. Around here, people tend to shy away from that kind of person." The warden, W. A. Duncan, told me that Davis was not a particularly troublesome prisoner. He was disciplined only three times—once for possessing tattoo equipment (it is prohibited because of the risk of transmitting AIDS), once for possessing marijuana, and once for using amphetamines. (Visitors are the source of most narcotics in prison.) Moreover, at C.M.C., for what may have been the first time in his life Davis actually excelled at something. For about two years, he worked in the prison's vocational sheet-metal program for six hours a day, at seventy cents an hour. Davis's supervisor, who asked that I not use his name, gave me a tour of the shop, and I saw about a dozen inmates manufacturing twenty-three hundred doors for Soledad prison. "The guys can get really good experience here," the supervisor said. He added, smiling, "The only thing they're missing,



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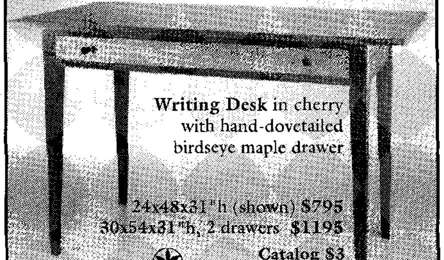

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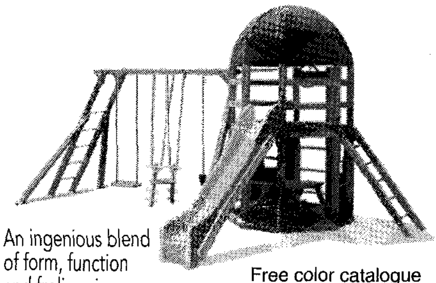

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for obvious reasons, is installation experience." Rick Davis, he went on to say, was his star pupil. Shaking his head with bafflement, the man said, "The guy was just an excellent sheet-metal worker, the best press-break operator we've ever had here." Indeed, Davis had boasted to Liroff, "I do renovation work for all the prisons—stainless-steel work—on the press break." The supervisor continued, "Rick tended to keep to himself, but most of the inmates do. Rick had a lot of potential. With his skills, he could have made forty-five dollars an hour. That's why what happened was such a disappointment."

Perhaps Davis knew that under the determinate-sentencing law it was more important than ever to keep his nose clean in prison. For all of its tougher posture, determinate sentencing, I was told by John K. Van de Kamp, the former California attorney general, never meant that inmates were to serve precisely the amount of time assigned by the judge. (In a long and varied career in criminal justice, Van de Kamp was the federal public defender—and, later, the top local prosecutor—in Los Angeles before being elected state attorney general.) "From the start, with determinate sentencing, a carrot was left in there at the insistence of the corrections officers," Van de Kamp said. "They were concerned about what leverage they would have over inmates if they were told that they were going to do, say, five years—period. So from the time it passed, in 1977, the law said that inmates could earn as much as a third off their sentences in 'good time'—that is, time off for good behavior." Then a complication arose: the overall state-prison population soared in the early nineteen-eighties—from eighty-five per cent of capacity in 1978 to a hundred and thirty per cent in 1982. "By 1983, the legislature found that the prisons were chock-full, and they were facing the prospect of court orders forcing the release of inmates—and no one wanted to have that happen," Van de Kamp continued. "So in 1983 the legislature passed a law that said inmates could now get a *half* off their sentences for good behavior, instead of a third. That took the heat off the crowding for a while."

It was a technical change, and it drew little public notice at the time,

I DINOSAURI DI VENEZIA

The past is empty:
the bones have been dug up
out of love,
numbered, bathed in shellac,
and swathed in plaster
for the long journey to the Museo
di Storia Naturale,
where Tyrannosaurus is still rex,
the dainty forelegs
still too short to reach the terrible mouth.
Where a nest of eggs,
potato-size, is too petrified to hatch.
A duckbilled herbivore
come late, forehead as high as a doge's hat,
brain grapefruit-size,
skin rendered the same unlikely green
as the Grand Canal—
shall a last doge be married to the lagoon?
Patch the old wedding barque!
O Love, where's the gold ring
to be thrown overboard,
quick, before the going gets rough?

The past is crushing:
in this sinking palazzo here's a footprint
to prove it, left
by a creature weightier and more ancient
than the parent my age
who's holding forth deep in Triassic ooze
one floor down.
Swarmed by children who are in heaven,
whatever it is in Italian—
in the Cretaceous, the past is desert,
a three-toed gully
filled with later, paler sand:

days crossing the badlands
delivered us at last not to the farm
where fossils were
the unwanted, ever-bearing crop
but to this:
roadside dinosaurs rearing their tiny, lofty heads
to look down at us.
Were we, not they, late for lunch?
I was just six,
riding nowhere on the back of a Triceratops.
How small my parents looked,
lost against the leggy pillars of a Brontosaurus,
hardly parents anymore,
hardly mine. How coolly the concrete
of the huge bodies
suffered my slight, warm-blooded touch.
O extinct age! O Rapid City!

—Debora Greger

but it had immense significance—particularly for Rick Davis. “From a political standpoint, what the legislature did hid the ball,” Van de Kamp said. “If the members just went out and lowered people’s sentences, it would look as if they were soft on crime. So here the legislature created the impression that only good inmates would get out, when in fact pretty much everyone gets good time, and that meant that nearly everyone got out after serving half his sentence.”

Here, again, Davis received no special treatment; he merely benefitted when the system changed to his advantage. He certainly understood what the change meant for him. On being asked by Lane Liroff in 1990 what his “out date” was, he answered without hesitation, “ ’93,” and he was right: he was released on June 27, 1993. He had served eight years.

DAVIS’S romance with Sue Edwards, which had subsided after his conviction for their joint kidnapping of Selina Varich, briefly revived, then soured again. She served only six months for her role in the assault on Varich and, after Davis went to prison, in 1985, she took up with a new man, a building engineer named Mike Mrava. In 1988, she married him. But less than three months later, on November 10, 1988, Sue was abruptly widowed: Mike Mrava was found in a culvert with a slashed throat and twenty-three stab wounds. A few days afterward, a man named Floyd Bailey, who claimed to be one of Sue’s lovers, confessed to the crime. Not long after Mrava’s murder, with Bailey in custody, Sue resumed contact with Rick Davis. Less than a month after her husband’s death, she wrote Davis a letter in prison. “I am finding myself (Still),” she wrote. “I know your going to think this is off the wall shit yet i do need to talk with you. . . . I need you.” Sue had inherited about three hundred thousand dollars from Mrava’s estate, and she bought a Corvette and spent several weekends driving down the coast to see Davis in prison. Photographs from that time show Sue sitting on Davis’s lap at one of the picnic tables in the C.M.C. visiting area. They were to be married, Davis later told Lane Liroff, and then Sue infuriated him by breaking off the engagement. “I was mad because this broad got me to thinking that me and her were going to get married,” Davis said. “Then she turns around and fucks me after I give her the ring.”

By this time, prosecutors, who had been suspicious of Sue’s possible role in Mrava’s death, learned that she had never actually been divorced from her first husband, William Edwards. In 1991, she was prosecuted for bigamy and theft for her effort to inherit Mrava’s estate. Davis wrote to Lane Liroff, who had prosecuted Bailey for the murder of Mrava and was to prosecute Sue for bigamy, and volunteered to testify against Sue. “She’s the Black Widow,” Davis told Liroff. He actually said little at Sue’s trial, but her lawyer, Pete McCloskey, believed that his impact was considerable. “He just sent a chill through the jury,” McCloskey said. “He got up there on the witness stand, and he was shackled, with those big tattoos everywhere, and he just about scared everyone to death. The prosecution showed the photos of them together, and you could tell the jury thought that anyone who would be involved with that guy had to be guilty.” On July 16, 1991, Sue was convicted of bigamy, perjury, and two counts of grand theft, and sentenced to six years and four months in state prison.

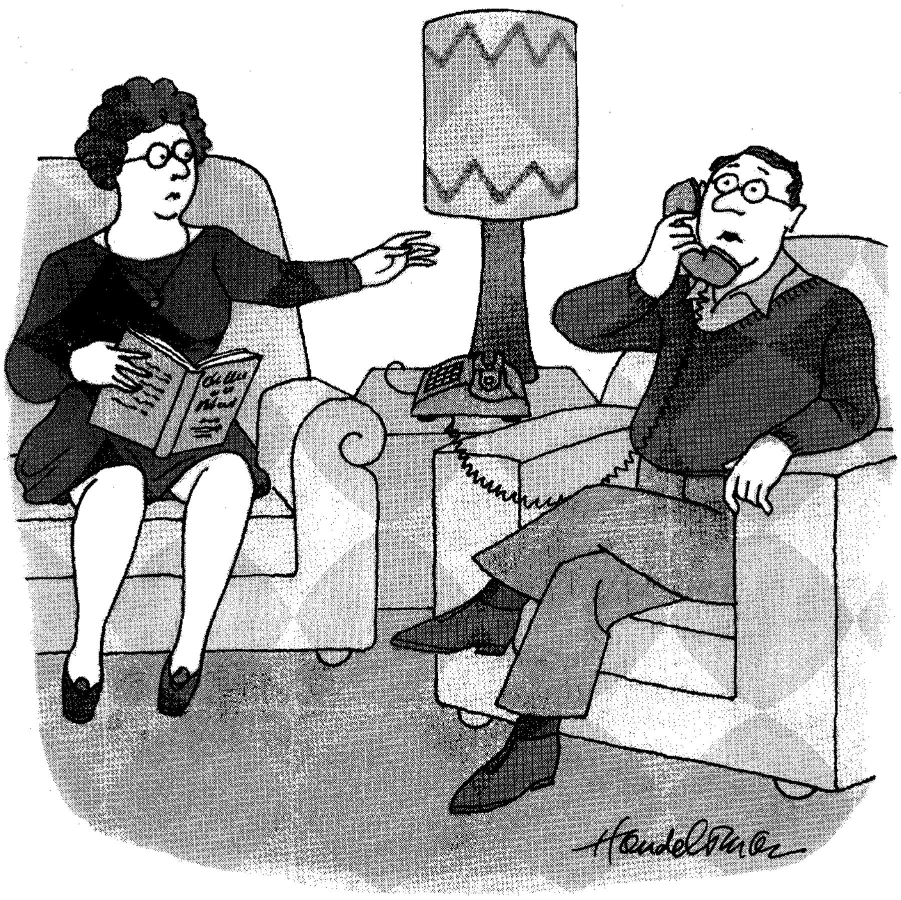
I went to see Sue Edwards at the Central California Women’s Facility, in Chowchilla, a brand-new prison, planted like a spaceship in the endless plains of the San Joaquin Valley. Her hair is now a lifeless brown and straight; her eyes are circled by little lines that make her look at least a decade older than her thirty-two years. As she sat down, she shot me a colder—and more hostile—look than any I had received at the men’s prison in San Luis Obispo. It made me reflect that, of three recent men in her life, Mrava had been murdered, Bailey was doing life without parole, and Davis could be facing execution. “There are thirty-five hundred women in here, and I’m the only one in for bigamy,” Sue Edwards said to me. “What do you think about that? Do you know what my life has been like? Do you have any idea? This is a prison, do you understand? Do you know what people think of Rick Davis these days? If I want to get out of here alive, I can’t tell you the story of me and Rick Davis.” Then she got up and walked away.

WHEN Davis was released from prison last July, he had nowhere to go. He had no home, no job, no friends, and no money except two hundred dollars, presented to him, as to all inmates, upon release. No parole officer had found him fit to be let out, but no judge had had the opportunity to keep him in jail longer: the law had simply directed that he be freed.

In July, Davis established residence at the Turning Point, a homeless shelter in San Mateo. The shelter, a two-story cinder-block building with vine-covered trellises, stands in the middle of a quiet residential neighborhood. (It is only a mile from the exclusive San Francisco suburb of Hillsborough.) Davis was one of about thirty guests at the Turning Point last summer. He made little impression. “He was unremarkable,” Sue Christensen, an official with the local shelter network, told me. “To stay here, you have to follow the rules, and he did.”

Davis also satisfied the terms of his parole. He was required to report regularly to the Redwood City parole office, a few miles south of the shelter, and he kept all his appointments from July through early November. “Davis was on a ‘high control’ level of supervision when he got out,” Ronald March, the supervisor of the parole office, told me. “That’s the tightest level of supervision, and it means we were in touch with him at least once a week—either he came here or we made an unannounced house call. He was taking care of business, as far as we could tell. He did everything he was supposed to do. He kept his appointments. He passed his drug tests. You usually see signs of when there’s going to be trouble, but we had no reason to be suspicious of his activities.” During those months, it appears, he never found full-time work.

On September 23rd, Davis received permission from his parole officer to visit his sister and brother-in-law in the Ukiah area over the following two days. Driving north from San Mateo, he



"Let me connect you with Edith, our specialist in ethnic conflict in the former Yugoslavia. My expertise happens to be in North Korean intransigence."

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would have passed directly through Petaluma on his way to Ukiah, some seventy miles north. Davis returned to San Mateo on September 26th, as instructed. It is not clear when he went back to Petaluma. What is clear is that on the night of October 1st he walked into Polly Klaas's house.

Polly lived in the center of town, just across the street from tiny Wickersham Park. Downtown Petaluma is famously picturesque. (In 1984, President Reagan's campaign team filmed its "Morning in America" commercials there.) Yet, as Polly's Aunt Elizabeth pointed out, "that neighborhood is picturesque, but it's not very good. There are bums around all the time." In July, 1993, the town had banned the public consumption of alcohol in Walnut Park, two blocks away from Polly's home, so much of the riffraff that used to congregate there had migrated to Wickersham. It later emerged that the scene in Wickersham played on one of Polly's fears. "Polly loved Petaluma, but ever since she was a little kid she'd been afraid of two things," her father told me. "She was afraid of the dark and of a man—some man—who would come and take her away."

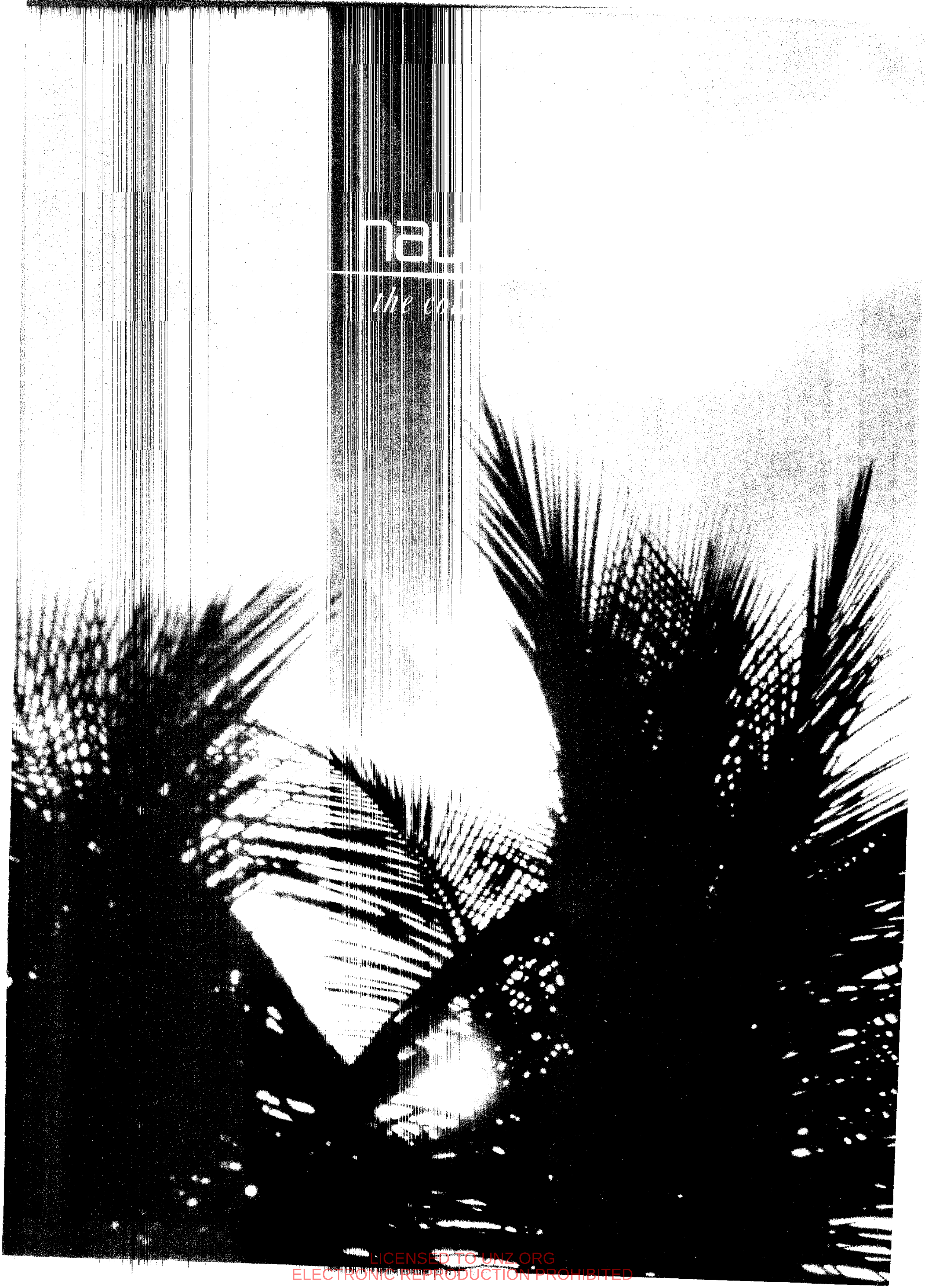
It remains a mystery why Davis chose Polly. Among Petalumans, rumors abound—particularly about purported accomplices. Had Davis stalked Polly? If so, she apparently hadn't noticed. Why had he asked which of the girls lived in the house? Had he been hired to kidnap someone in particular? At this point, there is no credible evidence that Davis had accomplices or had been put up to the crime by someone else. Davis himself, according to his lawyer, said that he had been in Petaluma to find his mother and get money from her, and that while he was high on drugs and alcohol he had picked Polly at random.

THE events of the first hours after Davis drove off with Polly form a big part of the case's mythology. Indeed, it seems that anyone in Northern California can recite the chronology from memory.

Eve Nichol called 911 at 11:03 P.M. The Petaluma police put out a bulletin on Polly's kidnapping by teletype to other police departments, with the heading "Not for Press Release." As a consequence, the Sonoma sheriff's dispatcher never announced the crime on its police-radio channel, because that channel is monitored by local reporters. (Petaluma's police chief later said that he'd thought—mistakenly—that such bulletins were immediately broadcast through secure means to all police officers in the area.) At 11:42 P.M., a woman named Dana Jaffe reported a trespasser on her property, which is about twenty miles from Petaluma. A pair of Sonoma County deputy sheriffs, Michael Rankin and Thomas Howard, responded at 12:03 A.M. and found Richard Allen Davis standing beside his white Pinto, which was stuck in a ditch. Davis told the deputies he had been "sightseeing." They ran a check on Davis, which disclosed no outstanding warrants. (In such routine encounters, the computer system available to patrol officers does not divulge criminal history.) The deputy sheriffs questioned Davis for forty-three minutes, searched his car, and gave him a sobriety test; he passed it. He is reported to have told his attorneys later that Polly was lying nearby in the dark, neither bound nor gagged, but did not make a sound or run away. Investigators now believe that she may in fact have already been dead. In any case, Rankin and Howard let Davis go.

In the days immediately after the kidnapping, Davis returned to San Mateo and continued to meet his parole obligations. On October 19th, he again received permission to visit his family in Ukiah, and that night he was arrested for drunken driving near his sister's house. Police again checked for outstanding warrants and found none. After a night in jail, he was again released. He met with his parole officer for the final time on November 2nd.

On November 23rd, Davis's parole officer learned that he had failed to report to the Turning Point shelter on November 15th, and put out word that he was missing. On November 28th, Dana Jaffe was wandering on her property, near where the car had been stuck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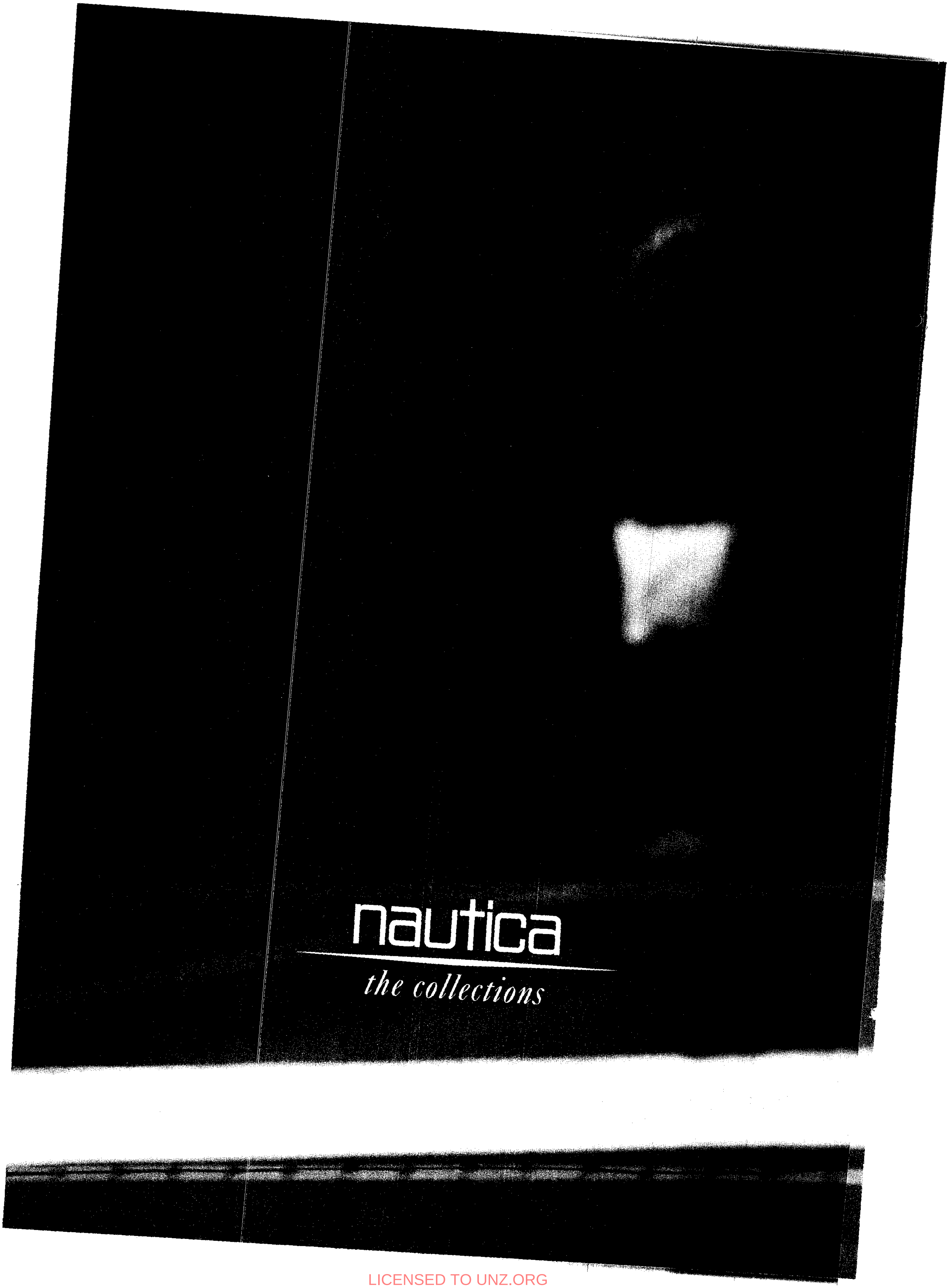
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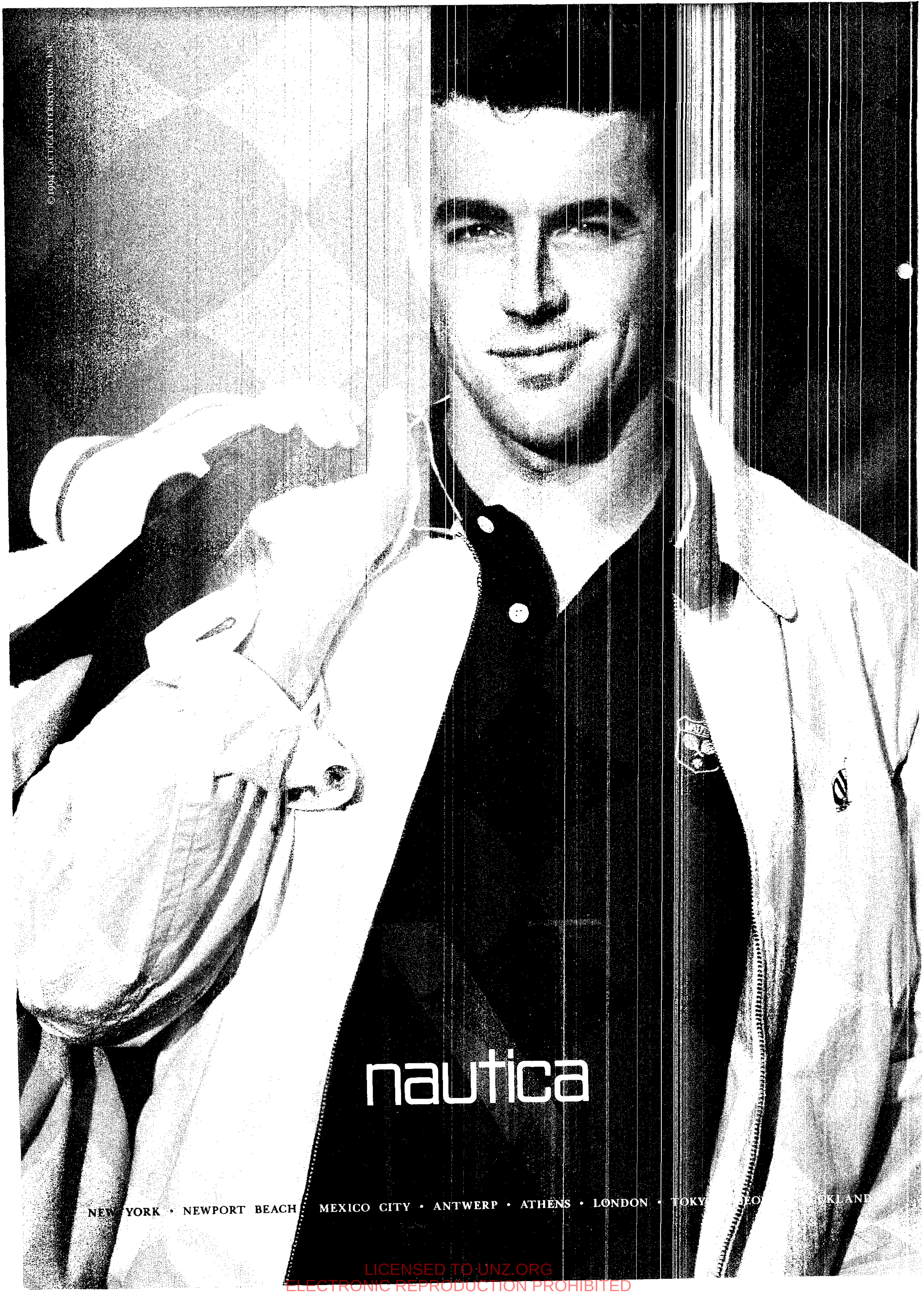

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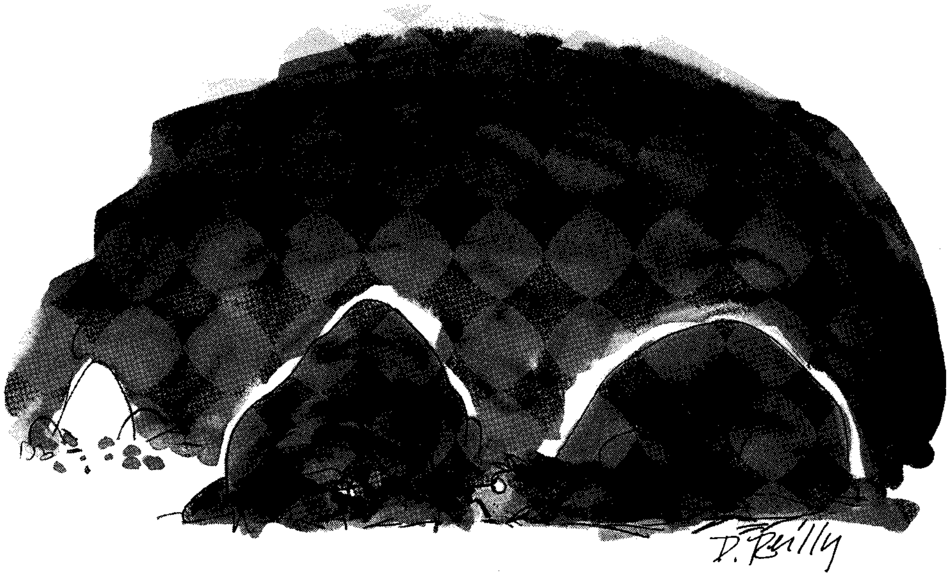
on October 1st. She found clothes and a condom. She called the Sonoma County sheriff's deputies, pointed out the items, and reminded them of the incident she had reported on the night of Polly's kidnapping.

The sheriffs found Davis's name in their records and, a day later, raided the house of his sister in Ukiah, found him there, and arrested him on the parole violation. A few days later, after investigators matched a palm print taken in Polly's bedroom to Davis's, he confessed and led investigators to Polly's body. Prosecutors subsequently added a sex charge to the kidnapping and homicide charges, and are asking for the death penalty. Davis has pleaded not guilty on all counts.

Both the Petaluma and the Sonoma County police departments have been judged harshly for their actions on the night of October 1st. It is said that the Petaluma police should have understood the implications of putting "Not for Press Release" on the bulletin, for if Rankin and Howard had known of the kidnapping they might not have let Davis go. If Polly had still been alive when they were questioning Davis, they might have saved her life. It is said, too, that Rankin and Howard should have at least recognized Davis in the ensuing weeks from the sketches that were plastered all over California. But, if they and the others did err that night, they were, it is safe to say, far from the only transgressors in Richard Allen Davis's lengthy passage through the criminal-justice system.



"No, it won't keep until spring. We have to talk about it now."

• •

EVE NICHOL and Marc Klaas seldom speak to each other these days. "The only thing that we had in common was Polly," Marc said to me. Eve has decided to leave Petaluma. Marc, in contrast, has decided to move to Petaluma, from his home near San Francisco. He has quit his job with Hertz and is devoting himself full time to carrying on the work of the Polly Klaas Foundation, which was established to coördinate the search for Polly and is seeking to become involved in preventing violence against children.

I spoke with Klaas at the storefront offices of the foundation. He has chosen to grieve for his daughter in public, and his psyche is conspicuously fragile. When I mentioned Davis's name, Klaas, raising his voice, said, "He's a dead man. That's what he is. He's a fucking dead man. He was dead the day they arrested him." He was passionate, too, on behalf of "three strikes and you're out," the legislative initiative that has become almost a memorial to Polly.

President Clinton, who met with Marc Klaas in December, cited the Klaas case in his State of the Union address just before he called for a federal version of three strikes—and, in mentioning it, drew the longest ovation of his speech. Three strikes enjoys broad support in California—eighty-four per cent, according to a recent statewide poll—and it seems destined to be enacted in any number of jurisdictions.

Several competing versions of the proposal are in circulation. They differ principally in that they count different crimes as strikes. In some of the more draconian versions, a pair of residential burglaries committed by a juvenile followed decades later by a check-kiting charge would count as three strikes. Other versions restrict the strikes to a relatively short list of violent offenses. The proposals also differ in whether prisoners with three strikes should have the possibility of parole.

No one knows for sure the price tag of three strikes, but preliminary estimates put the cost at several billion dollars for California alone. Another imponderable is how prosecutors and defense attorneys may change their behavior in the light of three strikes. "What three strikes will mean is that you're going to have charge bargaining," Van de Kamp, the former California attorney general, predicts. "People are going to plea-bargain to crimes only if they can be sure that it doesn't count as one of the strikes against them."

A broad three-strikes law would take the Richard Allen Davises off the streets along with some less threatening criminals—at great public expense. A narrow law would risk allowing the Richard Allen Davises to go free, and Californians currently seem unwilling to take that chance. Whatever its flaws and despite its cost, three strikes does appear to insure that those who should never leave prison never will. Yet, ironically, the broadest three-strikes law might lead to the same problems that plague the current system. A system that gives life sentences to nonviolent offenders will be perceived as both unjust and uneconomical—and, over the years, will be sharply, and perhaps randomly, curtailed. Likewise, depriving three-strikes defendants of the possibility of parole, even when they are old, seems both spendthrift and cruel. Still, for violent felons a three-strikes law would offer a relatively clear and fair statement of how much crime any one citizen could get away with. It would also establish, though too late for Polly Klaas, that no one deserves as many chances as Richard Allen Davis got. ♦

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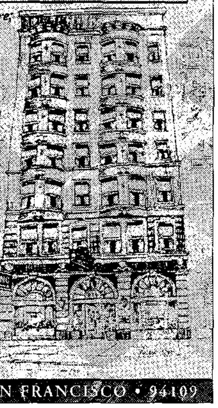

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AN UNHOLY RAGE

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BY ROBERT I. FRIEDMAN

FEBRUARY 25

THERE are many Baruch Goldsteins on the West Bank—and there are many mosques. "I do expect Arabs to kill Jews in the near future again—and I expect there to be another Goldstein who will go into a mosque and cut down fifty Arabs again," David Ramati told me by telephone a few hours after the massacre at the Ibrahim Mosque in Hebron early this morning. Ramati, an American, a Vietnam War veteran, and a Christian convert to Judaism, moved to Israel more than ten years ago. He was a neighbor and friend of Dr. Goldstein, who, apparently acting alone, entered the mosque and slaughtered scores of Arab worshippers praying quietly during early-morning services in the holy month of Ramadan. In January, I visited the ultranationalist right-wing settlement of Kiryat Arba, where Ramati and Goldstein both lived. When I spoke to Ramati after the attack, he told me that Goldstein had said he was becoming increasingly despondent over the course the Israeli government was taking with the Palestinians. According to Ramati, Goldstein had seen several of his neighbors die at the hands of Palestinian terrorists; he believed that Jewish terrorism was the only recourse the settlers had.

It might have been difficult to sense this aspect of Goldstein's thinking in the hours before he opened fire. He had spent the evening before the attack with Ramati and other settlers in a synagogue close to his home, his children on his lap, reading the account of the Jews' rebellion against their Persian masters given in the Book of Esther. That uprising is commemorated in the holiday of Purim, which would begin the next day. Purim, Ramati explained, "is a holiday to kill the people who are trying to kill the Jews." Ramati himself, while telling me that he could never take the life of an innocent civilian, also said, "It was a very propitious day to turn the tables on the . . . terrorists"—he meant Arab terrorists—"and show them a little terror of their own." He added, "Terror generates more terror. Arab terror generates in the end Jewish terror. Which will generate more Arab terror, which will generate more Jewish terror."

Ramati's belief that Israeli settlers may resort to violence to thwart any attempt by the Israeli government to place the Occupied Territories under some form of Palestinian self-government is one shared by many Israeli Jews. In January, an official of Shin Bet, Israel's F.B.I., told me that, by the agency's reckoning, fully a quarter of the hundred thousand West Bank settlers are hard-line militants, ready to go to the brink of violence; upward of two thousand of those are considered capable of committing acts of terrorism. He also said that militant settlers were already forming underground cells that might be targeting Israeli and Palestinian leaders for assassination, including Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and P.L.O. chairman Yasir Arafat, and planning to use indiscriminate terror against Palestinian civilians to undermine the peace process. This official added that the ultimate settler provocation—the act that would surely abort the peace process—would be blowing up East Jerusalem's Dome of the Rock, the third-holiest shrine in Islam.

Over the last decade, I have spent a good deal of time among the West Bank settlers. (In January, I was physically attacked and beaten by a group of them, who were angry about a book I had written on right-wing Zionists.) In my view, the most militant and most heavily armed among them are those living in Dr. Goldstein's settlement, Kiryat Arba, which is on the parched hills above the West Bank town of Hebron. These settlers, who arrived at the site in the late nineteen-sixties, have been in almost constant conflict with neighboring Arabs. During the Intifada, which began in 1987, settlers in Kiryat Arba and nearby

Hebron set up an organization called the Committee to Protect the Roads. The committee, which has dozens of active members, was ostensibly formed to convoy cars driven by Israeli Jews in the territories, but has also staged what amount to anti-Arab pogroms. Using military scanners, the settlers pick an Arab village where they won't run into the Israeli Army. Then two or three carloads of them drive into the village and, according to Ehud Sprinzak, a professor at the Hebrew University, who is an expert on Jewish extremist groups, "hit people, set cars on fire, turn vegetable stalls upside down, and then disappear."

The area around Hebron and Kiryat Arba has been plagued by a rash of drive-by shootings since the peace treaty between Israel and the P.L.O., known as the Oslo accords, was signed, last September 13th, in Washington. On December 4th, a Palestinian man sitting in a parked car in Hebron was shot to death by a settler from Kiryat Arba. A few days later, near Hebron, Palestinian gunmen killed Mordechai Lapid, who had immigrated from Riga more than twenty years ago, and his nineteen-year-old son in Mordechai's taxi van. Goldstein, a physician who treated many Jewish victims of terrorism, quickly arrived on the scene. At their funeral, attended by more than ten thousand people, a surviving son, Meir Lapid, called on the government to "transfer" the Arabs. "If the matter is dependent on money," he said, "we should be able to raise it from the world's peace-loving nations." The following week, three Palestinians were shot dead on a back road near Kiryat Arba. A man phoned the Itim news agency in Tel Aviv, claiming that the murders were acts of revenge for the murders of the Lapids.

In January, in Kiryat Arba, I met Mordechai Lapid's wife, Miriam, the forty-seven-year-old mother of fifteen children, who once studied classical piano. At the time her husband and son were killed, she was in Tel Aviv working with an anti-government-peace-agreement group. With her late husband, she had helped to found the vanguard settlement movement known as Gush Emunim. Cradling one of her small children, Miriam told me that peace would come to Israel only when the Arabs were ousted. Israelis would be more receptive to the proposal, she said, if "transfer" didn't sound so much like "transport," a word that reminds Jews of deportations and Nazi death camps. She does not understand why, as she sees it, the Israeli government gives the Arabs everything they need to have a garden of Eden in the Middle East, allowing them "to grow, to flourish, to feel strong, to fill the aura of this place." She went on to say, speaking of the Arabs, "Their souls are different. They are cruel. They are cruel to their brothers. And we nice people think we can live together with them. It's as if we were the womb that created another nation to kill us, to kick us out of here."

In January, Miriam and Meir Lapid organized a four-day anti-peace march from Kiryat Arba to Rabin's residence, in Jerusalem. Several hundred settlers took part, and Miriam camped in a tent outside Rabin's front door. With her were members of the Makhteret, or Jewish underground—a terrorist group that comprises some of Gush Emunim's key activists. In the early nineteen-eighties, the Makhteret, fearful that the Camp David accords would lead to Palestinian autonomy, went on a rampage of destruction, which included the maiming of two mayors of West Bank cities, in separate car bombings. The day after that attack, Mordechai Lapid told the *Times*, "They deserved it," adding, "I hope that Jews did it."

The battle against the peace process by Jewish settlers is being fought on a number of fronts, not all of them violent. In late January, leaders of the settlement group This Is Our Land, which has forsworn violence in favor of Gandhian tactics, held a press conference in Jerusalem to announce the creation of an illegal settlement near the spot where Miriam Lapid's husband and son were slain. Shortly afterward, soldiers arrested approximately fifty settlers who had crowded into an abandoned Arab house on the outskirts of Hebron. There was no violence whatsoever. But passive resistance is not popular among the settlers, and the movement has not caught on. Nevertheless, since January This Is Our Land has set up a number of shadow settlements of tents and beat-up trailers, in the hope of filling the jails with Jewish demonstrators and thereby forcing Rabin from office. Rabin called the group's activities "idiotic." He said he remained committed to existing Jewish settlements, but added, "In my humble opinion, many of them have no justification whatsoever. They don't con-

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tribute whatsoever to Israel's security."

Dr. Goldstein, originally from Brooklyn, had been a follower of Rabbi Meir Kahane, who was slain by a gunman in Manhattan in 1990. Following the assassination, Kahane's movement, Kach, splintered into three organizations. Two of them, Kach and Kahane Chai, have large followings in Kiryat Arba. The third group, which calls itself the Temple Mount religious seminary, is dedicated to rebuilding the Jewish Temple where the Dome of the Rock now stands. Its leader, a fifty-eight-year-old rabbi named Avraham Toledano, was arrested at the Tel Aviv airport last November, when, it was alleged, he was trying to smuggle in bomb-making material, weapons components, and arms manuals from America.

"I think Goldstein took the death of Rabbi Kahane very hard," Ramati told me. "I think he was despondent and also enraged." He continued, "You see, almost everybody . . . has said at least one time after a Jew has been murdered, that what should be done is they should go out and kill so many Arabs." But Ramati insisted that Kahane Chai had nothing to do with Goldstein's act. "Baruch killed on his own," he told me. "There was no organization behind him whatsoever. . . . That I can guarantee one hundred per cent."

Rabin has described the mosque massacre as the act of a deranged man, but no one—not even Rabin himself—can be sure. Certainly the Israeli government is assuming that there will be more acts of violence, and that they will not be acts of lone madmen. In recent months, Shin Bet has intensified its surveillance of the hardline settlers, tapping phones, intercepting mail, and planting informants. Leaders of militant settler organizations have stopped exchanging sensitive information on the telephone. Last week, a supporter of Kahane Chai from a settlement near Nablus, on the northern West Bank, took his own life, leaving a note in which he said that Shin Bet had pressured him to help them. The problem for the Rabin government is this: The previous right-wing Likud government had built Jewish settlements in the center of thickly populated Arab areas in a deliberate attempt to forestall the possibility of an Israeli withdrawal from the Occupied Territories. Now the Rabin government is stuck with thousands of radical settlers, one of whom may be the next Dr. Goldstein. ♦

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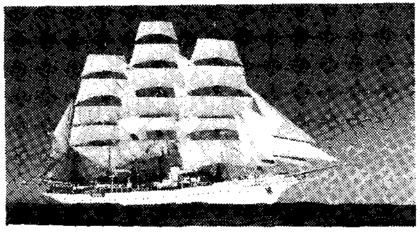

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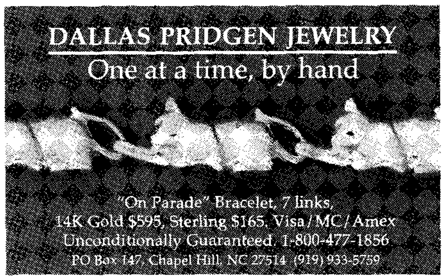

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IN THE GARDEN

THE SEASON PAST

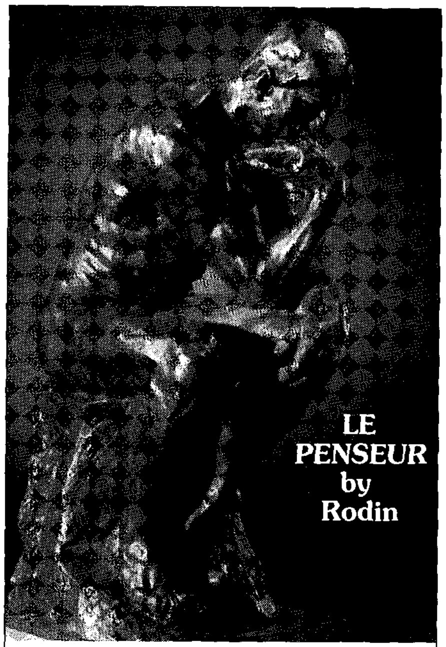
Before the new planting begins, there's time to reconsider the delights and disappointments of last year's harvest.

BY JAMAICA KINCAID

I WAS putting the garden to bed for the winter (with the help of an amateur botanist and professional gardener named Greg Madden, who had been assisting me all summer) when, looking over the empty spaces that had not so long ago been full of flowers and vegetables, I was overcome with the memory of satisfaction and despair—two feelings not unfamiliar to any gardener. Satisfaction was seeing the tips of the asparagus poke through the earth, coming all the way up, wonderfully whole and unblemished, from the deep trenches in which I had placed their roots. Even after many years of gardening, I never believe a live plant will emerge from the seed I have put in the ground; I am always surprised when it happens, as if every time were the first time. And a moment of despair was when I realized that none of my squash and pumpkin seeds were germinating, so no plants would appear, because some creatures, full of malice, had carefully scratched the seeds out of their hills and eaten them. I plotted the demise of the offending beings, and finally did catch one of them—a raccoon—in that pantywaistish contraption the Havahart trap. But when I was about to drown him in a barrel of water the three whining pacifists I have somehow managed to end up living with—my husband and our two children—made such a fuss that I set him free in wilderness far away from anyone's garden. (I do believe, though, that some instinct, not fully understood by any scientist, will lead him back to mine.)

MARY WOODIN

My Reine des Violettes and Madame Isaac Pereire, planted last April, were glorious in the summer. The perfume of the Violettes, in particular, was extremely pleasing; I kept burying my nose in its petals as if they were someone's neck. And the roses were remontant—the blooms kept coming. The dimensions of my foray into rose-growing were unknown to me until the beginning of April, when the rosebushes started arriving; by early May, there was a total of thirty-three bushes. I had not ordered them all at once; the excess came about because last winter was so long and cold, and I had so much time to stare at catalogues that I lost track of how much I had already ordered, and I sometimes made up, without meaning to, two or three schemes for the same spot in the garden. I bought my roses from Jackson & Perkins, Wayside Gardens, and Park Seed (Park has the cheapest roses, and they seem just as good as the others, but the selection is more limited; my wonderful Reine de V. came from Park, and it was five dollars less than in the Wayside catalogue), and from a nursery in Maine called the Roseraie at Bayfields, run by a very nice man named Lloyd Brace. (I know that he's nice only from talking to him on the telephone.) When the rosebushes began to arrive, I had not yet prepared the ground properly for them, because it was still freezing and snowing. So they were badly mistreated before planting, and looked half-dead by the time they were planted, except for the ones from Lloyd Brace, which came with fresh sprouts of green leaves on them, and looked exceptionally promising when they were finally in the ground.



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All the roses did well anyway, making me think—contrary to my expectations—that abuse must be a part of growing roses.

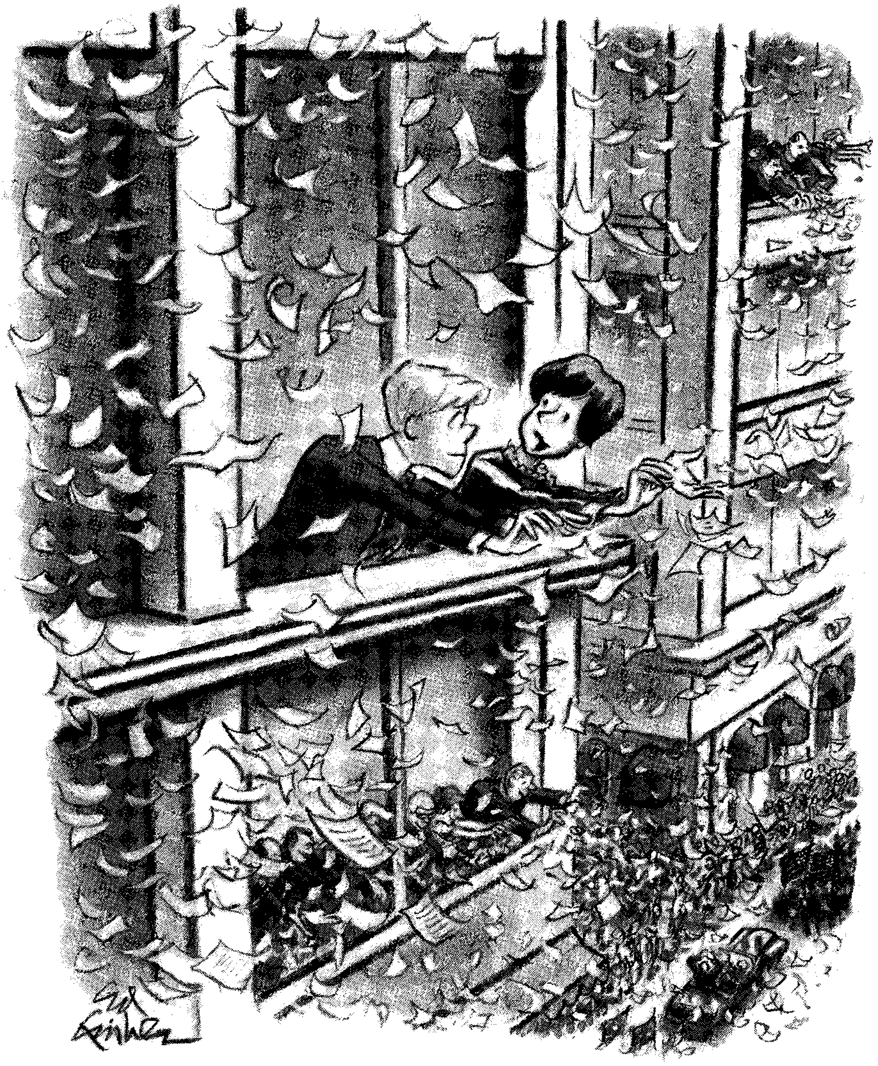
This business with the too many roses began two summers ago, when I received a letter from Jackson & Perkins inviting me to become one of the people in the United States to choose the best of the company's new roses for that year. In a brochure that came with the invitation, some people testified to the pleasure they had had while participating in this venture, and they were so effusive that at first I thought they must have got the roses free; they had not. Of course, the minute I saw this brochure I sent my money away so that I, too, could become a member of the Rose Test Panel. The competitors arrived at the same time as all the other species, but they didn't have proper names; they were labelled Pink Blend, Pink, White, and Yellow. I planted them, and at first I observed them closely, but then I forgot about the Test Panel, as other problems became overwhelming: the canes of the Souvenir de la Malmaison (which I got from Wayside) grew tall and then fell over onto the lawn, and it would not bloom; I had read Peter Beales saying of it, "This rose at its best is the most beautiful of all Bourbons, but at its worst it can be horrid. It hates wet weather and in such conditions seldom opens properly without help." When I had been staring for a long time at the multitude of flopped-over canes, it dawned on me that what I was looking at was not a Souvenir de la Malmaison at all, but something else—something that had perhaps been misnamed. Not so very long after that, I received another letter from Jackson & Perkins, inviting me to become a member of *next* year's Rose Test Panel. Actually, through a lack of communication between J. & P. and me, I had never voted on the four roses I had grown, and this left me with little enthusiasm for judging the J. & P. roses of the future. The rose I had the most success with was the Yellow, though it isn't one I would tell people they must have. A rose I *would* recommend to someone is Ballerina; all summer, I watched it send out sprays of dappled pink blossoms on long apple-green canes. I had planted it next to some clethra, and for a short while they were in bloom together, so I actually got a small glimpse of something I had planned.

Just when I was mulching and covering up the roses for winter, I came upon Christopher Lloyd saying in *Gardens Illustrated* (a magazine that becomes increasingly beautiful to look at), "I got fed up with all the trouble roses bring in their train. They get a lot of diseases and you can't replace a weak bush without changing the soil. They're quite disagreeable and make a very spotty effect even when they're flowering—a whole series of blobs. The climbing ones are quite shapely but the bush roses are pretty ugly." The capriciousness of a gardener is so appealing! I see that I shall be overwhelmed by the number of roses I will have ordered by next spring, and that twenty years hence I will firmly denounce the whole idea of growing roses.

I RETURNED from a visit to England in May and found my hedge of common rhubarb in an incredible state of bloom, the tall stems covered with panicles of white; I stared at it in awe, as if I had never seen anything so beautiful, but I had. It faded, of course, though not quite away: it turned brown—a deep, crisp shade, a tropical, not temperate, brown—almost as if in defiance, for everything else was in a state of fresh young green. I cut it down to the ground, and it grew back, so that by the tail end of summer I was able to eat some rhubarb again, but this seemed all wrong, all out of context: when the days are getting longer is the right time to eat rhubarb.

In early June, perhaps giddy from observing the rhubarb and planting various things, I went to the store to buy milk, and on my way out I bought three packets of nasturtium seeds. I had wanted to plant something along a walkway that leads to the door on the south side of my house—something that would spill over on the slabs of marble in a happy, haphazard way—and the moment I saw the seed packets I knew that nasturtiums would do. They turned out to be one of the pleasures of my growing season. I planted them very close together and I did not thin them but pruned and trained them to grow in only one direction: out onto the walk. They must have loved where they were, for they thrived. At night, the smell from them—sweet, like something fermenting that when consumed would make you crazy—was delicious. I considered my walkway a triumph and was on the verge of getting a big head about it, but then, looking through Wayne Winterrowd's most helpful book of annuals ("Annuals for Connoisseurs"), I saw a photograph of nasturtiums spilling out onto a walkway in Monet's garden. First, I felt wonderful that I had had the same idea as a great gardener, and then, unable to help myself, I felt envy, because his nasturtiums had turned out much better than mine. His looked like a painting—the way all natural beauty looks. Mine remained just a planting of nasturtiums.

A prostrate-growing evening primrose (*O. missouriensis*) that I found at the Equinox Valley Nursery, in Manchester, Vermont, was spectacular. I had never grown this particular primrose before and so had never seen the cycle of its amazing bloom: it has thick red stems from which sprout fat green pods (buds), sometimes with red spots on them, and each pod breaks open at the end of the day to reveal a huge bubble of perfectly simple yellow, which by the middle of the next day has become a limp, slimy thing, like a squished caterpillar. (I made my son, Harold, hold one, and when he did he said, "Oh, yuck!") Also at Equinox, I found a pink evening primrose (*O. rosea*). It is about ten inches high, with small, narrow leaves that turn red in fall; it spreads rapidly and is already all over the bed, but this will be just fine, because it is at the foot of the hollyhock and musk mallow and sidalceas. That corner of the garden—



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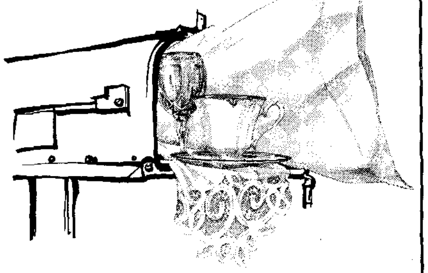

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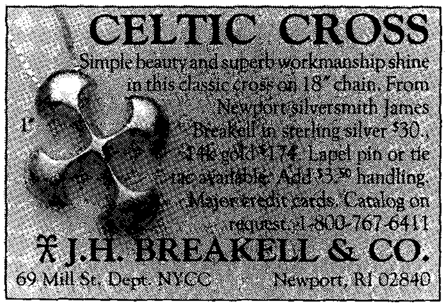

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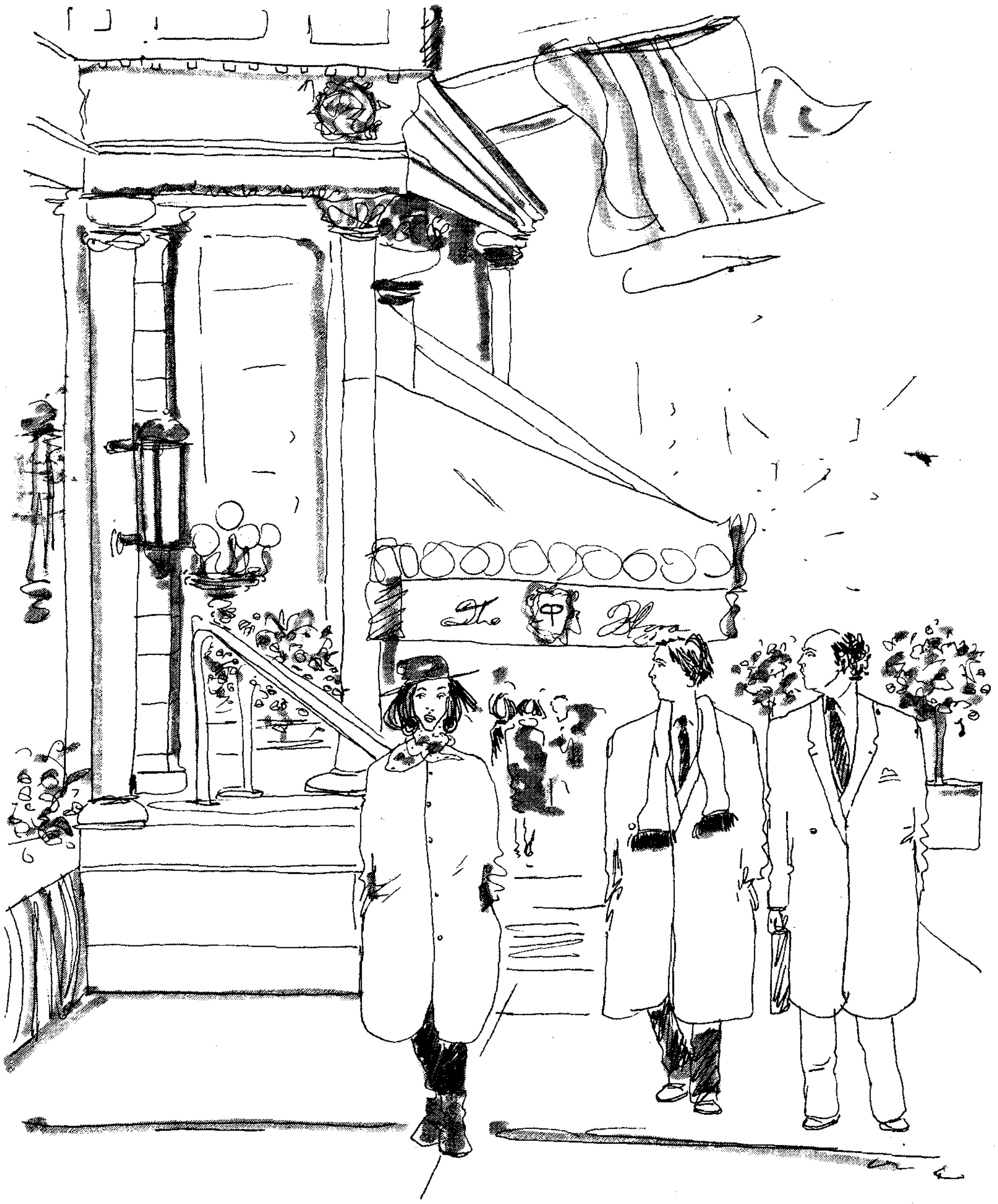

"Women! Isn't it unreal? They just keep getting better and better!"

• •

hollyhock, musk mallow, and sidalceas with the rose Cécile Brünner (both climbing and shrub) at one end and Ballerina at the other—was meant to be a mass of varying shades of pink, but the sidalceas turned out to be a horrid shade of lilac, not at all the pink that I had seen in the catalogue. I deserved this: I got them from a puffed-up plantsman's outfit in Connecticut, where the people are very rude and high-handed on the phone. Of course, they would not take the sidalceas back. They were also quite skeptical when I said that a Canada lily they had sent was another kind of lily altogether. They replaced it in the fall with what they said were bulbs, but I have never seen bulbs like that, and if these odd-looking things fail to turn into plants I can't imagine calling the company back to tell them so. This is a big contrast to my rapport with the people at Wayside, who are always eager to help, and make amends for every fault that's found; they even send letters of apology. (It's possible that this is an example of the way climate influences modes of behavior: Wayside is in South Carolina.)

Another disappointment: one day, a shipment of three-and-a-half-foot twigs arrived—apparently the hundreds of dollars' worth of fruit trees that I had ordered from a fruit-tree grower in upstate New York. They seemed such a far cry from the overladen-with-fruit trees I had seen in the catalogue that I almost burst into tears. I planted them on what was, for May, a severely cold and windy day, and a huge emptiness opened up before me: I thought, Between this planting and the reaping (I hope) to come, I will fill the time up, but with what? I did not know the answer, and I had to go lie down.

On another day, I got into a similar state of anxiety for a very different reason. I was taking an indirect route to the grocery store and I came upon a field of joe-pye weed in bloom. I had recently started bringing mullein into my garden, and when I felt I had enough of those I started raiding my own field for joe-pyes and bonesets. I love these flowers, and when I saw the field of joe-pyes it made me feel happy and giddy, because it was so unexpected (I had no idea that any were growing there). Then, when I got to the store, I heard the woman waiting on customers say to the man ahead of me, "Hi, honey. God, you're beautiful today," and this struck me as untrue, because I had seen the man quite clearly. After he left, I said to her, "What made you say that to that man? He was one of the ugliest men I have ever seen," and she replied, "That was my husband." Retracing my route on the way home, I was so blind with anxiety and shame that I did not even see the joe-pyes.

I WAS eating a plate of common Blue Lake green beans in August, and they were extremely delicious; I had never grown them before, and I realized that I almost never grow ordinary vegetables. I have become so confident of having a constant supply of food that often when I decide to grow things I can eat they have to transcend the ordinary: they must have a different color from the usual; they must have a different shape; they must come from far away; they must be the favorite food of people in the countryside of France or Italy or in the mountains of Peru. It was this perversity that led me to grow French Marmande tomatoes, as well as some other tomatoes, which looked like large gooseberries (called Green Zebra, they were the best tomatoes I have ever tasted), and various odd potatoes—one kind called Russian Banana, other kinds that looked like fingers or were blue-skinned or were pink when mashed. I also grew some cucumbers that were juicy and sweet and are ordinarily grown in Turkey or Syria (or somewhere near those places on the map), and some purple beans that looked great but turned a disappointing green when cooked.

In early September, I picked and cut open a small, soft, yellow-fleshed watermelon, and I was suddenly reminded of the pictures of small girls I used to see in a magazine for girls when I was a small girl myself: they were always at a birthday party, and the colors of their hair and of the clothes they wore and of the light in the room were all some variation of this shade, the golden shade of the watermelon I had grown. I would wish then to be a girl like that, with hair like that, in a room like that—and the despair I felt then that such a thing would never be true is replaced now with the satisfaction that such a thing would never be true. Those were the most delicious melons I have ever grown.

The leaves turned yellow and red and brown and then fell; the days grew short; the warmth from the sun grew thin. I planted six different kinds of fritillaria, and some flag iris, and some peonies—ordinary ones, not trees. Then one day the long chill arrived, the chill that no heat can penetrate. Winter. ♦

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PERSONAL HISTORY

JEWS

Alfred Kazin published his first book, "On Native Grounds," in 1942. In the more than half a century since, he has become one of America's preëminent literary and social critics. These recollections come from his journals of a lifetime.

BY ALFRED KAZIN

IN the midst of death we are in life—and itching to get away for the weekend. These hot summer days, there are so many of us cancer patients waiting for our daily radiation treatments that no matter how soon after dawn I get there on Friday mornings, so that I can make an early getaway, the crowd, in sullen temper, is already impatiently massed in the street.

Most days of the week, there are not more than seven or eight in the radiologist's waiting room when I show up. We silently take each other in as we wait our turn. There is a lot of silence here, interrupted only by the bossy, quick, sharp electronic pulses—whirr! whirr! whirr!—from the machine presiding in the next room. An almost religiously gentle but surprisingly fat doctor overlooks the two young female technicians. He sits in the corner like a Buddha, guarding the mighty lineup of loose-leaf notebooks. Imagine, one whole notebook to each customer! I feel vaguely sorry for him. He cannot be high in the business, for he is here from morning to dusk, no matter what hour I appear. The head man has a pleasant European accent, is conscious of his good looks, and is something of a fop. Tassels on his loafers. I can't stand his steady geniality. He shows up only on Tuesdays.

The treatment takes no time at all. Only the waiting seems endless as we study each other. A name is called, the patient passes through the door to the secret room within. A red light goes on. The patient is almost immediately back. In and out. In and out. Reminds me of a barber "college" or an Army brothel. Nothing about the process takes long. There is only the slight discomfort in once more depositing yourself without your pants on the cold steel table before the different surfaces of the machine tuck you in and circle around you like some damned planetarium in which you, even cancerous you, are the sun.

Friday mornings, when the wait is longer than usual and the place is so full that people are standing in the back, it is fascinating to see how differently we humble petitioners for life, for still more life, present ourselves. Rarely, on any day, do you see the desperate cases. For them, radiation may be too late. Most of us look as well as people can look at the beginning. For the old, this can be a very slow-moving disease. There is one humdinger, a startlingly beautiful Oriental woman, young, in lightly shimmering black, who is such a sight in this tiresome room that she sits in her own aura. I can't get over the wonder of this woman in such a place, and must stop staring at her. Once in a while, there are children. A rare sight: a young black child brought in so far gone that people vacate the couch for him. He lies there heaving, one arm dangling to the floor. Friday, even in the morning, is for the very pious dangerously close to the Sabbath, but a cluster of heavily bearded Jews surprises me by pushing in a wheelchair with a very sick-looking old woman in it. They stand behind her in the waiting room, managing in some way to look at no one here, no one at all.

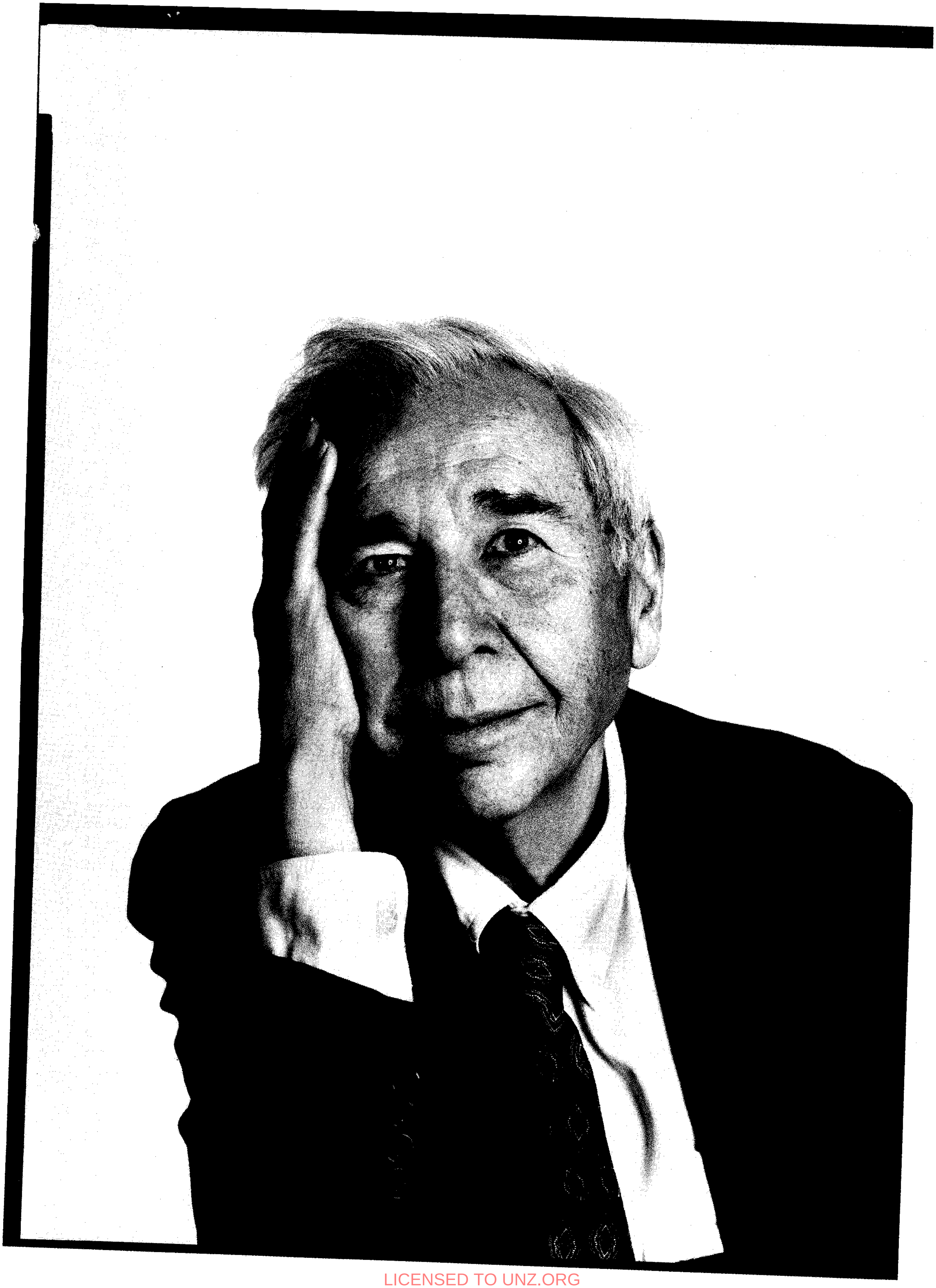
The uninteresting young blond receptionist—not a native, to judge by her accent—always has the radio on. She smiles a lot. Observing her in the waiting room day after day, week after week of this ghastly summer in which everything has had to wait on my illness, I can see that she does whatever she does by rote, as if taught. She moans softly in disapproval when I fall behind in my payments, then hurls a "God bless!" at me when I leave. This is an expression that I last heard in wartime Britain, and it doesn't suit her. Its greasy good nature grates on me, coming from someone who is always pushing bills at me that get more unbelievable each time I am forced to look at them.

Every day, there are new faces. The young girls make me shudder, it seems so unjust. There is a men's group of my generation, all in their seventies, *alte kockers* who sit around recalling old TV shows, solemnly bringing back John Daly, Arlene Francis, Bennett Cerf, Dorothy Kilgallen. It gives me a pang to hear again the best lines of Fred Allen, my favorite satirist from a time when anyone named J. Danforth Quayle would have been straight man to Groucho, and not so near the Presidency of the United States. "How much would you charge to haunt a house?" Fred Allen liked to ask the nearest pest. Once, these men would have met to play pinochle around the pool at Grossinger's. Now they wait, still all good humor with each other, for the machine that is going to postpone our death.

"*Timor Mortis conturbat me.*"

When the lifeboat to which I was assigned on that Liberty ship cracked up in the storm, became unusable, and depth charges from the Canadian escort were being hurled off like mad because a Nazi submarine was rumored to be in the neighborhood, I remember waiting on the deck in my life preserver for God knows what, and looking at the ocean so near my face, startled that I was not in the least afraid, and more

Alfred Kazin, photographed by Richard Avedon in New York City, February 10, 1994.



amazed by the occasion than anything else.

For once, the sense of danger usual in my life was coming from the outside. So here. My cancer is so real to a lot of people that they feel free to probe me front and behind, stick me, prick me, haul me up and down, insert my claustrophobic head in the drum of one scan after another, in a process splendidly named Magnetic Resonance Imaging. They are all over me, being in charge, as I am not. While my charming, Harvard-trained urologist confesses that he loves cases like mine to distraction, and seems all charged up, the many technicians ordering me about have so often done this routine that their boredom reduces me to feeling that any preoccupation with myself is bad form. Except for that enlarged and hardened organ, "no bigger than a walnut," that has taken over my life and embarrasses—never pains—me by forever sending me to the bathroom at the most inconvenient times, I am not of the slightest interest to these white coats. I am as unsurprising to them in life as I would be in death.

Yet what an army we are, and behind us what a mass society—all dead. Cancer is the subversive sea licking at the shores of everything supposed to be established and safe. When my mother was reduced to a skeleton and was clearly about to enter what, as an Orthodox Jew, she called "the world of truth," a nurse insisted on stuffing food into her mouth as if she, too, were afraid of death and were determined to keep my mother in the world of appearances. When my friend the historian Richard Hofstadter was dying in Mount Sinai of leukemia, he kept reaching for the manuscript under his bed of "America at 1750," the first volume of his projected history of the United States. One of his last remarks: "I've never had any trouble with my will." Anatole Broyard at the last committed himself to a Park Avenue alternative-treatment specialist, swallowed dozens of pills a day, chatted brilliantly on the phone from Cambridge, claimed, "I am intoxicated by my illness." It was the cleverest act in Anatole's always clever life. He even got a posthumous book out of it. Knowing Anatole, another nut like me for whom writing is all, I am sure he would have thought the exchange of his life for a memorable death almost fair—if there was going to be a book in it. Of course, he would miss the girls. No one I've ever known has been so graceful and funny about sex as he was—especially in that memoir of the Village after the war, when books were still as sacred as sex.

The dead refuse to leave me.

Leonard Bernstein's wife, Felicia, groaned, "I have smoked my life away." The poet Jean Garrigue must have greeted the news of her cancer with her accustomed fatalism. When a promised teaching job failed her, she looked up bitterly at the sky and howled "Existence!" The wry young classical scholar Steele Commager died of throat cancer. Brilliant son of a brilliant father, he was as ironic and disbelieving about everything as his father, the historian, as old as the century, is not. Visiting me shortly before he went to the hospital for the last time, Steele, with his usual sense of the absurdity of all things except translating Horace, laughed that he had been forbidden cigarettes and booze but *commanded* to eat all the ice cream he could get down. My sophisticated and very fastidious friend Mark Schorer, from Berkeley, who turned up his nose at anything remotely considered vulgar, was reduced by a colostomy to carrying his wastes in a bag at his side.

LAST night, the streets were wet, seemed to reflect the thousand and one brightnesses streaming from the street lamps and still lighted shopwindows. There was a friendly fog. The whole thing gave me that strangely familiar feeling of having returned to the end years of the last century—a feeling borrowed from my lifelong fascination with Victorian London, the world of Sherlock Holmes, and from the Saturday nights of my boyhood, when my father regularly took me down to the Lower East Side for the meetings of the Minsker branch of the Workmen's Circle.

Broadway was so *condensed* is what I mean, like a stage set, and, while furiously lit up, was also deep in shadows.

I have never lost this association between shadowy dark streets and suddenly finding myself in another century. When I first went to Rome and stayed on in winter, I would walk in the shadows covering the narrow, alleylike streets between shut-in palaces and churches as if in a trance of memory. I had been here before! And if I came out into Trastevere on a busy night the glittering arc lights over the stands selling everything in the world plunged me back into the Brownsville open market on Belmont Avenue, alongside which I grew up.

Joe Liebling used to say of the streets painted by Maurice Utrillo that they made you want to weep. For me, the old Jewish streets of the Lower East Side, where I have never lived, tell me something of Charlie and Gussie Kazin before I knew them. I am still looking for them on this dark Saturday night. They were married on a Saturday night, which is about as much as I will ever know of their wedding. The year is 1913, something like that, not far from the nineteenth century. They are very much alone—the chief reason they married in the first place. So far as I can figure out, there were no birth certificates for the likes of them in czarist Russia, and they were as unsure about their actual birthdays as they were about everything else in the dark past. Mama was twenty-four, Papa twenty-six. She was a seamstress, from a heavily Orthodox family, so large a family that she seems to have felt lost by contrast with the good-looking favorite—who was even named Schaene.

Gussie must have considered herself unmarriageable in that narrow hole of a shtetl. No one ever told my mother that she looked just like Emma Goldman, whose round, bespectacled face and thick body never kept the men off. Gussie fled at the first opportunity with the brother she loved, who had decided to try his luck in a place called New Haven. Schaene and her husband were murdered when the Nazis reached their town.

What I would give to bring to life the first encounter of the two, whose lifelong silence with each other left me with such a sense of their solitude—and of mine. The young fellow from Minsk is an orphan, will never get over the day his father, Abraham, died—in New York, in his twenties—leaving his mother to bear a posthumous son and to flee with two boys back to Minsk. Where she marries again, puts my father in an orphan asylum. He will learn to fend for himself, will prove adventurous enough to return to America and in America to go West as a painter of boxcars on the Union Pacific Railroad before turning East to find a Jewish girl to marry. He will always seem to me the lonesomest man in the world, more like a son than like a father. I learned to love him; Pearlie, my kid sister, never could.

The newly married couple had just a furnished room (his? hers?) to return to after the ceremony. She stopped on the way to pick up some food for them. He must have gone on ahead, for when she reached the room she found him weeping. She told me this in later years. She told it with a certain contempt, I thought. "Like when you was a little boy," she added.

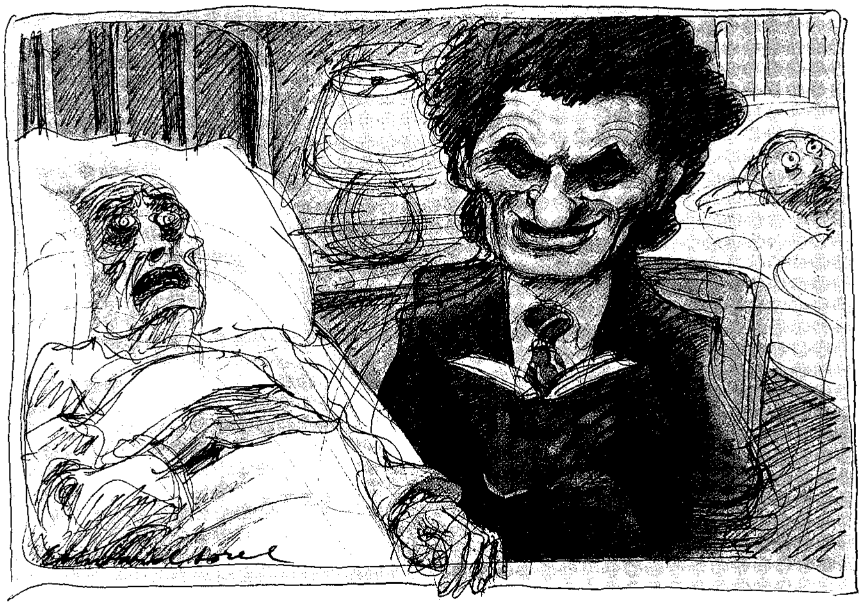
JERZY KOSINSKI has committed suicide—sensationally, of course—putting his face in a plastic bag while sitting in the bathtub. From the moment I first saw him, in the seventies, working the crowd as the newly elected president of PEN American Center, smiling exuberantly and describing himself as "the latest Polish joke," I was impressed by the talent he put into becoming a celebrity—as an actor come from afar to play a role in this country. I soon found that I could not believe a word he said, he was such a public entertainer.

No doubt, this had much to do with his being a survivor of the Holocaust, though in his first years here he was not crazy about identifying himself as a Jew. And, for all the atrocities visited by Polish peasants on the little boy in "The Painted Bird," the book that so violently introduced Kosinski, it is not clear why he is always on the run and is easily singled out as a victim. I remember Elie Wiesel, another celebrity created by the Holocaust, once demanded of Kosinski, "Are you a Jew?"

I followed Kosinski's ascent from afar, fascinated by his intimacy with big players—Oscar de la Renta, Henry Grunwald, Abe Rosenthal, Warren Beatty, the heir of Marshall Field. Kosinski had once married the widow of a millionaire, then married a descendant of a German baron. He played Zinoviev, the famous Russian Bolshevik, in Warren Beatty's film "Reds." I was surprised one day to get a card from him announcing that he was a fellow at Yale and inviting me to attend the dedication of a Holocaust memorial—in New Haven.

I was even more surprised to read a piece on the Op-Ed page of the *Times* in which he described himself visiting hospitals at night. He would carry the jacket of one of his books in his raincoat and, when he was asked for identification, would show it as the only credential needed. Enough, it seems, for him to be welcomed into the hospital, where he would sit himself down at some stranger's bed and, like a ministering angel, proceed to read, sure that, whatever the hour, the patient needed to hear from the works of Jerzy Kosinski.

This self-portrait of Kosinski as a kind of Walt Whitman in the Civil War hospitals was such a piece of intrusive arrogance that I was staggered by Kosinski's clout with the Op-Ed-page editor at the *Times*. I pictured myself in New York Hospital after my heart operation. Nauseated, no longer sure which world I am in, I am unable to read anything, to understand anything but my helplessness. My dinner tray lies intact, the food looking more repulsive by the hour as I pray for someone finally to come and take the mess away. In comes Jerzy Kosinski, in his raincoat. Like Prince Myshkin in Dostoyevski's "The Idiot," he is looking for some poor soul to befriend. Smiling at me warmly, he removes from the famous raincoat a few pages he has photocopied from his latest book, and, in his most vigorous Polish accent, proceeds to read, read, read, although I am swimming in nausea. Myshkin-Kosinski concludes his reading with a fraternal kiss on my feverish brow. With a sigh at so much suffering, he moves on to another bed.



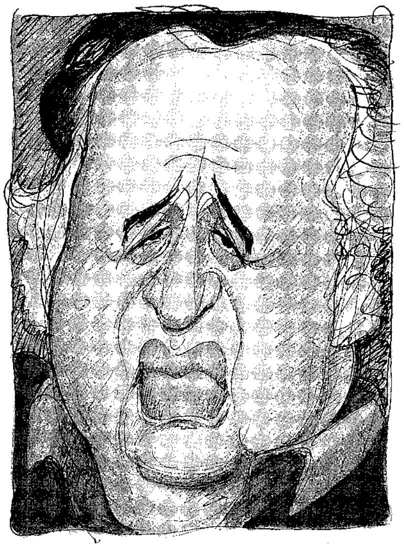
JERZY KOSINSKI

Like Prince Myshkin in Dostoyevski's "The Idiot," he was looking for some poor soul to befriend.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY EDWARD SOREL

We had one real meeting. Out of the blue, one day, he invited me to his apartment, on West Fifty-seventh Street. I found myself on a sofa so ridiculously deep that I felt my host had me at his mercy. As if the shelves thick with photographs of famous people were not enough, Kosinski name-dropped at such a pace that I felt myself sinking deeper and deeper into the sofa—especially when he recounted how a famous French Nobel biologist "practically died in my arms." I had clearly been invited so that I would champion his cause, write about his work in a purely literary spirit: he had just been accused in the *Village Voice* of not writing all of the books he published. But instead of discussing his work he built up such a picture of the elevated circles in which he moved that I felt a great desire to depart, but couldn't seem to extricate myself from the sofa.

His final anecdote made my head spin. Kosinski told me that when Pope John Paul II was still Cardinal Wojtyla he was privileged to show His Eminence around New York. At the corner of Fifty-seventh and Sixth, there was a newsstand with the usual superabundance of girlie magazines. His Eminence was shocked at the display. "What kind of people sell this stuff?" he demanded of Kosinski. "Well, Your Eminence," replied Kosinski, smiling faintly now as he recalled his answer, "they're usually Jews."



HAROLD BLOOM

Bloom is all literature, positively lives it. He gives the appearance in public of a slightly exhausted Falstaff.

ON the plane to Dallas, I'm reading a remarkable interview with Harold Bloom that amounts to a dialogue with himself. What a driving mythmaker about every writer he takes up—and what a prodigy! His roommate at Cornell told me that Bloom had all of "Measure for Measure" by heart. His redoubtable Cornell professor M. H. Abrams still talks of him with awe. Says that while Bloom was still at Ithaca he had only to take up Chinese before he passed his teacher.

The most startling product, for his age, of the old Bronx, Yale Professor of the Humanities Bloom looks just like my rough old City College classmate Zero Mostel, once Samuel Joel Mostel, who not only claimed he earned his nickname by his spectacularly low marks in school but also drove teachers crazy. Zero never stopped acting. He was as sinuous as a monkey for all his girth, as loudly dominating in life as he was in taking over the stage in Ionesco's "Rhinoceros." When he robustly played Tevye in "Fiddler on the Roof," he took over the whole shtetl, the people, and what was left of the czar after Zero got him in his teeth. You forgot that the original Tevye was a pious little milkman with too many daughters, whose only daring in this life was to sigh, "With Your help, I'm starving to death."

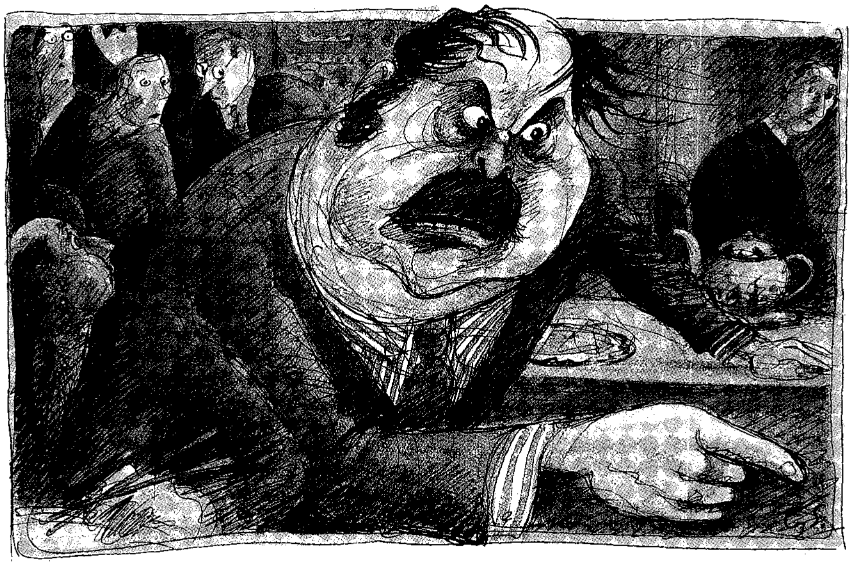
Zero was so histrionic on all occasions that you had to laugh even when he was clearly taking up too much space on this earth. When the French novelist Christiane Rochefort and I had just been seated at a Chinese restaurant on West Seventy-second Street, I saw Zero at the other end of the room and vaguely waved. I had seen him many times on the stage, but he had not seen me since college. To my horror, he remembered me all too well. Seizing on a book that I had written about a Brooklyn childhood—Zero had had one, too—and which he apparently disliked, with all his well-known contempt for anything not in his rambunctious style, he told me off in stark colors right over the head of everyone else in the restaurant. Mlle. Rochefort's English was not up to Zero's, and she was totally bewildered, even frightened, by the onslaught. Zero finally subsided, smiled as if he expected applause, and turned back to his dinner.

The round, prematurely shapeless Bloom is all literature, positively lives it. He gives the appearance in public of a slightly exhausted Falstaff—one of the many Shakespeare characters he knows right down to the ground. He has so many baby critics in his train that he seems to enjoy his fame a bit wearily. But, reading his interview, I become merry. Bloom has so assimilated all the great English and American texts that he has them talking to each other. Not a man to be frightened by the scare word "canon," his canon has Freud reading Shakespeare and Shakespeare seriously taking account of Freud. I like his contempt for all the little commissars now in the English Department instructing us to look down on so many classics, but I can't agree that they are moved by "resentment." They don't look up enough to any real achievement to be resentful of it. What old Yale types so resented in Bloom that they got him out of the English Department and deposited him in a chair of the humanities was the Bronx, the Jew, the impudence that he brought to his gifts.

Talk of resentment! The wife of a Yale English professor said to me one Sunday morning as I considered renting her house for the summer, "My husband is not here. My husband is in church, on his knees, praying for the death of Harold Bloom."

WRITING this in the hospital waiting for my old-fashioned arthritis shot, a solution made up of gold. The gold syringed into me week after week, left buttock one week, right buttock the next, is not the kind some doctors enjoy up front. The head surgeon of a hospital across the street supposedly makes eight hundred thousand dollars a year—information leaked by a friend, to whom it was leaked by a dominating figure in the cancer business.

Which leads me to think of my own doctor, who has gently taken care of me for years, has twice saved my life, and whom I love, not least because his



ZERO MOSTEL

Zero was so histrionic on all occasions that you had to laugh even when he was clearly taking up too much space on this earth.

grandfather was famous in the old Jewish trade movement for standing up to anyone on behalf of what used to be called the "downtrodden." (He was once in jail for this.) And they were.

But, oh Lord, how we have all "risen." A millionaire patient's photograph next to my doctor's desk. The big bash at his house New Year's Eve. What waste. The champagne flowing, flowing. The flowers alone must have cost a sum, and there was such a spread of food on the big round table that you felt you had to compliment the hostess every time you passed. The young girl waiter in a tuxedo was so agreeable that I half expected her to curtsy. All this to meet with bald, plump reps of the East Hampton crowd in evening clothes. The doctors at the party bore the same white, glassy look of superiority that comes from standing in your white coat over some trembling wretch in his underwear. A psychiatrist sympathetic to Alfred Adler, who believed that personalities were often formed by the need to compensate for some physical deficiency, laughed as he regaled me with names of the withered-arm group, which he calls the "Captain Ahab brigade": the dominating types who more than made up for their affliction—Kaiser Wilhelm, a pugnacious gubernatorial candidate, a famous philosopher, etc. He reminded me that Stalin belongs to this group, and ended, "Boy, did he compensate!"

As people said their goodbyes, one doc embraced the host and said in Yiddish, "Here's to an even better time next year!"

EVERY other year or so, some old student of mine, now doing extremely well, insists on taking me to lunch in order to laugh off the B-minus or C I gave him at Amherst or Berkeley. Ridiculously ornate lunch this time in midtown from an investment banker, James P., the sauciest of the lot. The food on my plate has obviously been chosen for the picture it made, as radiant as the French countryside in May. Otherwise, it is inedible.

The way to the men's room is a padded elevator. I ask James about a doctor who makes a million per annum. He politely informs me that another doctor, a client of his, makes two million. When a patient asks for satin sheets during her stay in the hospital, he decides that she is open to any bill. This, James adds quickly, enables him to charge other people less.

BABY born on a stairwell in a Coney Island housing project thrown into a trash compactor ten stories below. The mother, Melondie Cummings, is nineteen years old. Second time in six months a baby was thrown down a chute into a compactor in Brooklyn.

Tate Roman, twenty-one years old: "What we're saying here is, if they throw a kid down the incinerator, that person should be punished." A twenty-five-year-old man, who refused to give his name: "But you never know what's going through her mind. She may be going through some depressing problem—like maybe she had AIDS, or something."

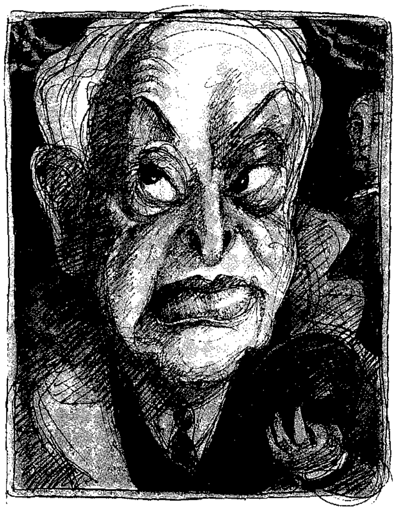
AT Pasternak's grave, in Peredelkino, the lovely Moscow suburb where so many writers live, we drink to him—a typically Russian routine of toasting the dead, presumably wishing them well. Yevgeny Yevtushenko tells the story of two young poets who, under pressure to denounce Pasternak for "Doctor Zhivago," actually asked Pasternak for permission to do so. After taking this in, Pasternak ironically gave permission. What disturbed him, Yevtushenko says, was the fact that the two were skipping and jumping for joy as they went off. Their consciences were clean.

Yevtushenko: "I am hoppy to tell you that both these bahstids came to bad ends."

I WAS uneasy in my mind when I went off to this dinner party to which Saul Bellow and I were both invited. It turned out to be even more of a jolt than I had expected. As Max Schmeling's manager once said, "I should of stood in bed."

Bellow and I were born the same week, in June, 1915. I have known him for more than forty years, have admired and celebrated him, and I feel that I understand the springs of his talent, which have to do with his innate sense of the primitive sources of life. He is like a character in a Greek tragedy: his many apprehensions, his famous moodiness, his acute and unrelievable sense of a world that may actually be dying before our eyes—these are not "personal" and neurotic, whatever the self-fulfilling fatalism they bring to his relationships, but an intuition (with the cycles of Jewish disaster always in his mind) that we are all up against forces we can hardly name, much less master.

One of his earliest, and best, novels, "The Victim," takes place in New York as an allegory about the totally unreasoning prejudice that was behind the Holocaust. It ends with the innocent victim humbly asking the man who has been tormenting him because he regards *himself* as the greater victim, "Wait a minute, what's your idea of who runs things?" Who indeed? No other American novelist in our day has so directly put this question to the universe at large with Kierkegaard's "fear and trembling." We are so secular now that, like Job's comforters, we think religion consists of just supplying the word "God" to the riddle of human pain. But Job asked the right questions of our fate, and Bellow does, too.



SAUL BELLOW

The springs of his talent have to do with his innate sense of the primitive sources of life. He is like a character in a Greek tragedy.

The trouble is that Bellow is also a university intellectual, loves being in a university, and has moved in the company of the conservative Big Thinkers at the University of Chicago. He has been much involved with the traditionalists Allan Bloom and Edward Shils. Shils even read one of his novels in manuscript. The University of Chicago thrives on absolutes, no doubt because its professors, especially Bellow, think of the city as the last word in philistinism. I know a professor of law there who advocates repealing *all* New Deal legislation. The protagonist in "The Dean's December" says that "my modernity was all used up. I became a college professor in order to cure my ignorance."

At the party, Bellow gave me a turn. I knew that, like many Jewish intellectuals from the immigrant working class who were forced to their knees before the altar of Marxism during the Depression, he had been moving right. The Jewish working class was now just an occasion for nostalgia. As Jules Feiffer said when he was asked why so many of his friends were getting divorced, "they can now afford it."

Bellow at college had written for a Trotskyist student paper. My heart sank when I heard that Bellow once said, "Who is the Tolstoy of the Zulus? The Proust of the Papuans? I'd be glad to read him." But I was not prepared, when I entered the party, for Bellow's vehemence about liberals. When I said that I had been troubled by the conservative line on the *Times* editorial page one week, Bellow flashed out, "How can you call a paper conservative that publishes Anthony Lewis?"

IN the Atlanta airport once, I saw a young woman holding up a placard that read "Ban Liberals." When I ventured to ask her just how she would enforce this, she shrugged, and said, "Well, maybe I should have said, 'Ban Liberalism.' " When I foolishly pressed on and asked how *this* was to be done, she scowled and said, "Where you from?"

FACING me as I write is the cracked, much mended photograph of a clean-shaven young Russian Jew who died on the Lower East Side just about a century ago. A poor garment worker, he wears a frock coat and a white evening tie in which to have his picture taken.

I have needed to have this photograph near me ever since I found it—the only one of him that has survived—at the bottom of a pile of family photographs. He died perhaps twenty years before I was born, and I have only the barest outline of his existence here. I have never known anything about his life in Minsk before he became part of the tidal movement of Russian Jews to America. No one was ever able to tell me with any confidence just how old my grandfather was when he died, why he died at such an age, or how his widow could have had his body thrown into one of those now unlocatable mass graves in which poor immigrants were buried in their first ravaging decade here. All I was ever able to pick up from his firstborn son, my father, who seemed to me even when I was a boy to be a perpetual orphan, was that the young man in the photograph, my forever absurdly young grandfather, was "somewhere in his twenties," that he may have been a union organizer, and that I had been given my Hebrew name in the usual tradition of naming the newborn after the nearest dead ancestor. So there was a chain linking me to the undiscoverable past! My nearest dead ancestor, the only one with whom I have any connection, was called Abraham. The name was everything to me, but the name was pretty much all I had of him.

There was all this silence about him. It was not like the besetting grimness with which my father and mother always divulged anything about their first lives, in the Old Country. There was no family saga, no great background to attach themselves to. Mine were intensely humble people, totally without *yichus*—family pride and prestige. The thing that, as I grew up, drove me crazy was their sense of their insignificance in the Promised Land—Charlie Kazin, always condescended to by successful relatives, helpless-feeling, shy, waiting to be accepted for a painting job by the steward of the Painters, Decorators & Paperhangers of America, to be smiled upon by his own folk in the Socialist Party of America, the Workmen's Circle, the Minsker branch (No. 99) of the Workmen's Circle.

Groups, institutions, public buildings, the Eastern Parkway branch of the Brooklyn Public Library just to sit in—to these my father could attach himself. But he seemed to have no familiar and easy name for his own father. He never mentioned the dead man unless I pressed him for his memories. He could hardly bring himself to mention the death, the shock of that moment back on the Lower East Side—he was four or five—without looking as if he had been struck in the face.

There were just a few strangled words for what happened after the death. The young man's widow was "with child." When she was delivered of a second son, he was, of course, named Abraham, after his dead father. My grandmother apparently knew no English, and must have been so terrified of the strange land that she never registered her son's birth in New York.

I have never been sure of my father's mother's name. There was, glimpsed for a second and then totally lost, one other photograph of my grandfather—this one with her. In the patriarchal tradition, he alone is seated, the supposed center of the family, its mainstay and support. She stands, one hand on his shoulder. My father, as a little boy, is happily curled up at their feet. My grandmother is sharp-faced, looks determined. No one is smiling.

My father lived in silence even when he included me in his walks and expeditions around New York to parks, museums, David Mannes's midwinter concerts at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Philharmonic's summer concerts at Lewisohn Stadium. Once the show, the concert, the expedition was over, he had nothing to say.

Each of these occasions was epochal for me, a discovery of the great city of New York, to be remembered in every detail, like the mighty Egyptian figures in the Metropolitan Museum who, in the old days, presided over the great central hall, or (after a Lewisohn Stadium concert) the amazing sight in the Bickford's cafeteria at Broadway and 137th Street of people no better dressed than we were actually cutting into a boat-shaped slice of watermelon with fork and knife instead of thrusting their faces right into it.

When my father volunteered to say anything to me at all, it was to go over again those first adventures in America, which I knew by heart and loved, because they, like books, gave me the connection I craved with America itself. He had managed to get himself to America in 1907. With his solemn pride in being even a little part of America (a pride I hungrily grabbed at), he liked to remind me that 1907 was the peak year of immigration: "1907! There was more than a million of us at Ellis Island that year!" He had been sent up to Albany by a Jewish immigration society to work at a potash factory near the Hudson. He had worked in the Chicago stockyards, shaking cattle skins free of salt, had been a stitcher in the Hart, Schaffner & Marx factory. Intoxicated by his freedom to go anywhere in his new country, he went farther West, painting boxcars on the Union Pacific Railroad, and was offered a homestead in Colorado. "In 1912," he wrote in a pathetic reminiscence, jealous when both his children began to publish, "I decided to go east as I did not hear from my mother for six years." He needed to get married, and, of course, there were no Jewish girls in Colorado.

None of his talk ever contained the slightest reference to me, any hope for me. He was as alone with himself as he was with his dead father, Abraham. After my mother died and I would regularly phone him—"Papa, how do you feel?"—he would respond exactly the same way: "As well as can be expected."

It was this silence, so much self-containment, that drove me to make a myth of my grandfather, to turn him into the only hero in my family, to regard his absence as something I could fill up not in imagination but with my helpless love, my longing.

I NEVER invent anything, I just react. Here I sit at the end of another century—old, like the century itself—still beginning my day as I have ever since I was a boy: writing up things in my notebook as if my peace depended on it.

It is all very strange, as strange as I have always felt to myself. I am a grandfather twice over, near enough the finish line to be more and more haunted by the past. But, as Faulkner said, "The past is never dead. It's not even past." When I was ten years old, a repeated failure in the Friday-morning arithmetic tests at P.S. 125, on Rockaway Avenue, I wondered if I should not end it all. The school would call my mother in, not knowing that she had no English. The shame of my nothingness in school, of my family's ineptitude in possibly having to account for it, to deal with it, was more than I could bear. In the corner pharmacy, there was a skull with crossbones advertising iodine: "POISON, FOR EXTERNAL USE ONLY." I bought the smallest amount of it, for a nickel; carried it in my pocket for days deciding what to do. I could not let us down.

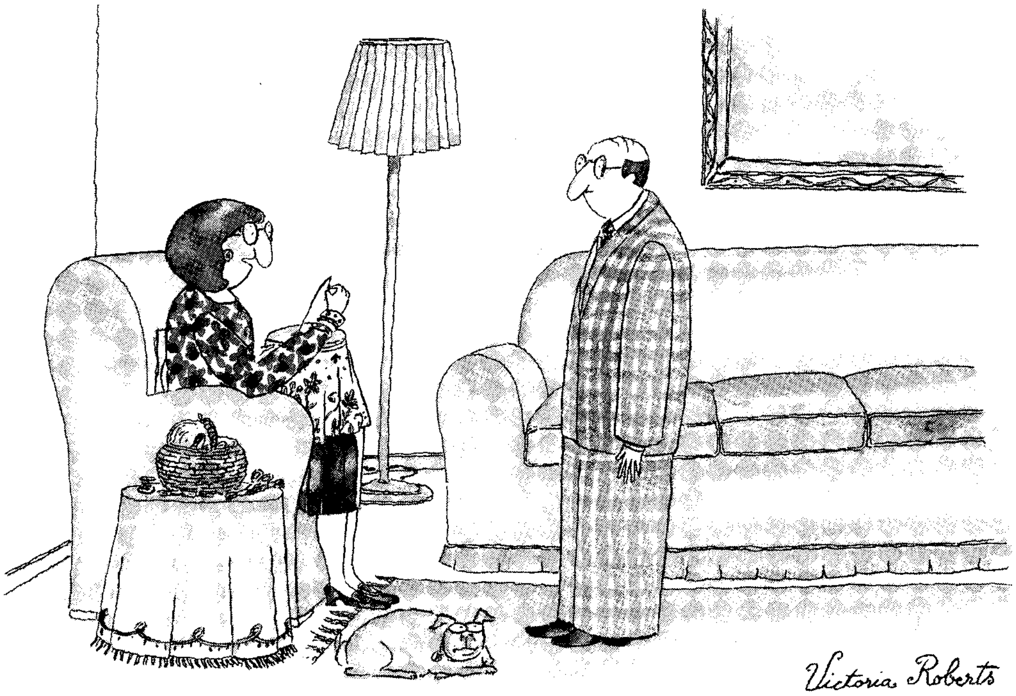
PASSING under our kitchen window on my way home from the subway at Borough Hall, I loved to look up at Asya standing at the window in the last light, preparing our evening meal. And then all the ease and charm of our young marriage would unfold for me, right there on Clinton Street, before I got to our front door, on Remsen.

Brooklyn Heights, 1938: the downtown streets dense with traffic for the bridge and dark on a winter's day, and lined with churches, banks, courts, municipal offices, stationers', the old central library on Montague Street, the main offices of the Brooklyn Union Gas Company, one big street clock, lawyers on Court Street hungrily bunched together but looking to grab any passerby who could be turned into a client. The air was resonant with bailiffs, city marshals, lined legal papers foolscap size. But in the center of the center, one room and kitchen, fifty a month, we had our love.

The minute I left the house for the Forty-second Street library and my excited all-day reading in American writers for my first book, I could feel in an instant flush of delight how that grid of dark, radiating lines, offices, marble bank fronts, subway openings, the El on Fulton Street, and the trolleys for the bridge—how all that dark, busily official, and endless hum of topmost Brooklyn life—enclosed us, enclosed us tight. So that at night, as we lay on our just-made-up sofa bed listening to a Haydn cello concerto on WQXR against the fits and starts of city traffic, we had a delicious sense of being alone and all to ourselves on one sluggishly turning flywheel of the city. In the sudden stillness of a Sunday night, one shining cross in the venerable church across the street (Brooklyn, the city of churches) burned at our window.

None of that belonged to us—not the documents being turned over all day, not the proprietary New England airs that Brooklyn Heights still gave itself as we walked down Remsen Street to the harbor against the background of classic brownstones. Beautiful wooden doors with exquisitely etched glass inserts. At night, you could often see the hall light, and even the curve of the stairs. Another world, another world! I could write about the mansion dominating Columbia Heights that figured in Ernest Poole's "The Harbor" (or so I guessed), but I could not imagine myself in it.

At the end of Remsen Street, however, you could wedge through the fence to face that great jewelled breast of



"It's a sampler, like everything else in my life."

"I ate some yogurt once. It was very good."

was ashamed, but not so ashamed that I did not go on dreaming and wanting.

THERE were just two steps from the street to the front door of 256-A Sutter Avenue, in Brownsville—steps off which we used to bounce a Spalding rubber ball to be caught on the fly. The outer door was glass, enclosed in an iron frame, and there were iron bars across the glass to protect it. Inside the short hall, before you took two steps to the long hall, were the buzzers for all the families in the tenement. It seemed to me that the same names, like ours, had been there forever. People were too poor to move much, though in the Depression there were evictions. Bad weather never stopped city marshals from turning a family out, dumping the furniture on the sidewalk while it rained. People dropped coins into a can to help the family move. My mother was enraged by evictions and once led a pack of women to put the furniture back.

At the end of the long hall were the mailboxes. I hated the very look of them, dead flat on the wall. Any time I opened our box to find a typed, official-looking, business-size envelope, I dreaded having to open it and explain it to my parents. It always brought bad news.

There were three apartments on this ground floor, just before you got to the stairs. The center one was for the Polish janitor and his bitter wife and butter-colored daughter, who were the only non-Jews in the building. My mother was from Poland and was afraid of Poles. Anne, a blond girl from another Polish family—a violinist like me—sat next to me in the Franklin K. Lane High School orchestra, and we often walked away from school on Evergreen Avenue, carrying our violin cases to the cemetery adjacent to Highland Park, the most secluded place in which to pet. Little did I know that she would become one of the first policewomen in the city.

• •

Manhattan floating on the water. Now everything was ours—the cobblestones leading down to the piers under the old "Japanese" iron bridge at the foot of Montague Street, the iron-doored warehouses, the freighters tied up below with one small light in the rigging, and, out there to the right, above all and mastering all, the great Brooklyn Bridge itself. Everything on Columbia Heights was related for me to the bridge's hard leaping and thrusting glory. The immigrant John Roebling had dreamed it; the immigrant's eldest son, Washington, had built it after the dreamer was struck and killed by the ferry he was going to replace. And here Hart Crane had written the only lines—"O harp and altar, of the fury fused,/(How could mere toil align thy choiring strings!)"—that could match John Roebling's dream.

We were radicals; our friends Richard and Felice Hofstadter on one side of Montague Street, Richard Rovere on the other, were radicals; and it was inconceivable that anyone intelligent was not on our side, with Auden, Malraux, Silone, Orwell, Hemingway, Dos Passos, Steinbeck, Wilson, Farrell, and every young writer we knew. It was 1938. Thirteen men from City College—students, faculty, and alumni—were to die in Spain. It was an age of faith, and they were soldiers of faith. We alone were pure. The only evil in the world was Fascism. That took care of all other things, like our personal lives. To know that we were good because we were on the side of history added to the world-historical sense of purpose with which I was writing my book, though the subject was only America. The age was with me, the excitement of the thirties was in my book and was getting me to write it—along with my being twenty-three and lusting for everything in sight.

So, at first, it did not matter when the book was published—in the midst of the war—and the wildest hopes were amazingly realized. I was excited going everywhere in the country for *Fortune*, describing the wartime scene, excited by the whirl of New York and the high, lean towers of Radio City, excited even more by the women in the morning light, the proud, beautiful women of New York, the breasts and hot purple mouths of the Bergdorf women, the fantastic sexiness of New York at lunch in certain cool restaurants—all of it hot and cold at once, frightening to dream about. But I dreamed continually, I made the mistake one day of showing Anne where I lived just as my mother was washing the windows that faced on Sutter Avenue. The girl's blond hair shone on our street, and struck my mother, watching us at the window, as a physical threat. She was overcome with fear, was hysterical when I got home. "Are you planning to marry this *Poylishe*?" she demanded.

THREE apartments on one side of a floor faced three on the opposite side. We occupied the right corner on the third floor. It was the thirteenth apartment in the building, and so was numbered 12-A. Superstition was rife. My mother, who was from Dugzitz, a shtetl no one but a Dugzitzer had ever heard of, and which I have never been able to find on any map of Poland, regularly instructed me, when I opened our front door to leave for school, to put out my left foot first. This, I later learned from all the associations with "sinister," the left side, was misinformed: it was the left you were to distrust. My mother was remarkably active, a tireless home dressmaker, whose sewing machine kept us alive when the building trades collapsed in the Depression and there were no painting jobs for my father. But she had no knowledge of the trans-Jewish world I could walk into any day.

On the landing between the first and second floors was the opening from which the clotheslines extended to a twin tenement across the yard. I loved to watch my mother haul in the lines when it was her turn to put out our clothes to dry, to hear the pulleys rattling as she worked the lines back and forth. The yard was never quiet. There was always someone in it, singing to the back windows in an appeal for coins—*Italyener* yelling up operatic arias, Jews crooning nostalgic songs like "Belz my dear little town," meant to wring tears of recollection of the Old World, from which, without exception, all parents seemed to have come. We thoughtfully wrapped the pennies in newspaper before flinging them to the singers in the yard.

THE center apartment across from us impressed me whenever I stopped in to see a boy named Eugene. There was a beaded curtain between the rooms and a copy of some famous English painting that showed a stag at eve drinking from a lake. Catty-corner lived the only family whose son was known to be a "bad one." He was a failed boxer who, after being repeatedly knocked out in bouts in Canarsie, had taken to pilfering and was seen skipping from one roof to another just ahead of the police. I was always hearing about people in the neighborhood being taken down to the Liberty Avenue police station, and once actually saw Lepke Buchalter, of Murder, Inc., who eventually "got the chair," threatening a storekeeper. We ourselves were innocent in everything. My father's pants were once lifted from a chair near an open window. (The thief came up the fire escape.) My parents never stopped giggling over this.

There was no doorbell to Apartment 12-A—just a metal slab that whistled when you turned it to the right. The long, unlighted hall from the front door to the icebox, at the end of the hall, just before you turned left into the kitchen, smelled bracingly of the paint on my father's overalls and was lined with empty seltzer bottles in the slats of wooden boxes waiting to be picked up the next time the seltzer man came around. My mother and I regularly refilled the icebox from a yard two blocks away, one square chunk at a time, carrying it between us in a large towel.

The kitchen was the largest room in our apartment, and the center of everything. The toilet occupied one corner of it, right next to the sink. My mother had her brown Singer sewing machine at the window. Our kitchen was her little dress shop. There she met her customers—neighborhood women who often sat around the kitchen without much on, waiting to be fitted.

It was a long time before we got steam heat. For most of my childhood, a big black country stove in the kitchen provided the only heat in the apartment. When I was small, my mother in deep winter made up a bed for me on kitchen chairs next to the stove.

One horrible morning, the stove gave out completely. My mother finally managed to get hold of the landlord, an immense, powerfully bearded Jew named Wishnevski. He clearly disdained us, walked in as if he owned us as well as the kitchen, muttering that he got no profit from us, we were dirt, of no account, a terrible bother. Looking the stove over with contempt, he suddenly, with just his arm, threw it over. My mother screamed. I made a mental vow to kill him when I got just a bit older.

This was my introduction to the real world of Brownsville beyond my family. How far removed we were even from the rest of Brooklyn, and "New York" was another world. We had been dumped by real-estate speculators into the far-

GREEN FOR THE LAND

Because why—I was dis-
similar—

they staked my feet,
tied my hands,
threw me in,
but I stuck, I
caught on the side,
they see:
I lived.

No more room on the pages
of my green book to write on,
and someone coming back
wanting me: thief

of my land, my childhood thief.

—JEAN VALENTINE

thest recesses of far-out Brooklyn, near unknown, unapproachable Queens on one side and, on the other, what was still the wasteland of Canarsie, Jamaica Bay, the great Atlantic itself. Once, this was all farmland; then the subway came out, and reached its terminus at New Lots.

All I knew was that my immediate world was Jewish, that everyone and everything was Jewish, Jewish all day long. Little did I know that Brownsville and East New York would become mostly black, two most desperately poor and despised neighborhoods, always in the crime news. The tenement in which I spent my first twenty years would be demolished to make room for a housing project named after Langston Hughes. Mike Tyson, the former heavyweight champ, now in prison for rape, came from Brownsville.

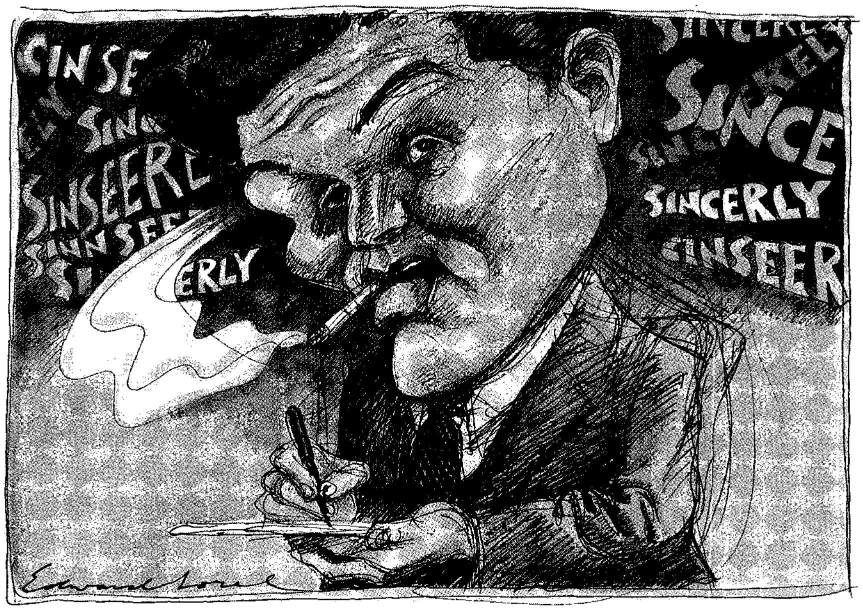
Also from Brownsville and other poor immigrant neighborhoods came Aaron Copland, the painter Max Weber, and David Daniel Kaminski, who became Danny Kaye. The great Nobel Prize physicist I. I. Rabi, who liked to say, "If I had stayed in Poland, I would have been a tailor." Joseph Hirshhorn, who somewhat later, thanks to the uranium he spotted in Canada, was able to give his name to an art museum, in Washington, D.C. The astonishingly erudite art historian Meyer Schapiro and his brother, Morris, after whom Columbia named a building. Julius Garfinkle, who became John Garfield and first starred in the Group Theatre's production of Clifford Odets' "Awake and Sing." My sister, Pearl, had a schoolgirl crush on Juli. When I asked him for an autograph that I could triumphantly take back to her, he said, "What should I write?" "How about 'Sincerely, John Garfield'?" His face fell. "How do you spell 'sincerely'?"

I WOKE up one day in Brooklyn Jewish Hospital to find that over my bed and over every bed near me in the ward was a plaque marked with the name of a Jewish donor. It was like waking up in a family cemetery.

IT was another world then, before Hitler. We were not Zionists. The oppressed of other races were not forgotten, though we knew no other race but our own. My father revered the Yiddish labor paper, the *Forward*. This impressed me more than anything else about him. When he exultantly read from the *Forward* to me, with its news of the international working class, he was not alone. He was full of pride in what he was reading aloud, positively worshipping every item. In his excitement, he read at breakneck speed, as if afraid that someone would stop him, read so fast that I would laughingly beg him to slow down. The *Forward's* masthead carried the opening line in every Socialist Bible: "Workers of the World Unite!"

We were still living in the nineteenth century. Whitehead called it a "period of hope." As I remember, sometime in the twenties, a black man was lynched in Pennsylvania; the flaming headline across the face of the *Forward* read "POGROM IN PENNSYLVANIA!"

WHEN I sat on my parents' bed in the front room, which looked beyond the ailanthus trees to a distant horizon pierced by distant church spires, I could see that there was much I needed to learn. Pearl and I lived for the new books we borrowed every other day from the Stone Avenue Library, which had more space for shelves than the Glenmore Avenue Library. But at the moment I was also transformed because of the women who were always there—by the life that throbbed in our kitchen.



JOHN GARFIELD

When I asked him for an autograph, he said, "What should I write?" "How about 'Sincerely, John Garfield'?" His face fell. "How do you spell 'sincerely'?"

An enormous horizontal mirror rising over the kitchen table drew everyone to it. The women in their slips, waiting to be fitted or to try on a new dress, were always looking themselves over as if I weren't sitting at the table doing my homework. A loud, busty girl named Yetta, standing before the mirror, laughed merrily when her mother reproached her for pulling at her dress to show more of her breasts. "This is what the boys like, Ma! This is what the boys like!"

The women in the kitchen were the most vivid thing in my life. My father was outside all this, read his paper in the "dining room," where we never dined. Then, bit by bit, thanks to the adult books I could now read without a teacher's help, thanks to my father's silent inclusion of me as we walked New York, as we went up against the awesome city by ourselves—just the two of us!—I saw a public world very different from my mother's kitchen.

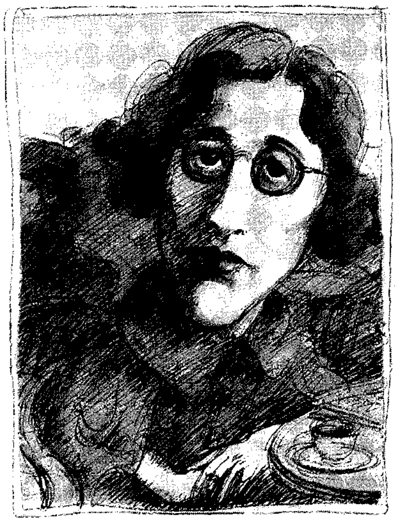
There were still open-air trolleys in the twenties that went all the way down Brooklyn straight to Coney Island. These became my ecstasy. People sat happily crowded together on benches that spanned the width of the car. The conductor easily made his way back and forth on a platform along the side to collect the fares passed down to him. You knew you were getting closer to Khuny Hilund, as my mother called it, when grass appeared between the tracks. Soon there would be a whiff of cool, salty air right off the ocean. Another world, another time, paradise! Everyone knew it, because one unforgettable summer afternoon, amid the excited clanging of the trolley bell as we got into Coney Island and I prayed that such a sun, such a day, would never vanish, people started singing.

I READ and read and read. Everyone read a lot, even the tough guys on the block who always beat me in a fight. Pearl and I had fraudulently obtained extra library cards, so that we could be sure of having enough to read. As I went home from the library, I made sure to impress the boys standing in front of Epstein's candy store with the advanced titles I had picked up.

When I was fourteen or fifteen, a boy named Willie, with whom I was always fighting and arguing, took me aside one day and said, in the most aggressive way, "I'm reading a poet I bet *you* never heard of." "Yeah, who?" "His name is Ezra Pound."

It was a feisty neighborhood. A boy you hardly knew would suddenly decide he couldn't stand the look of you and punch you around. My cousin Nat, on Herzl Street (always pronounced "Hoizl"), was like that. We were born enemies. In winter, the snow was never cleared but was piled up in yellowing, pissed-on hills and icy barriers, through which we cut tunnels. Nat liked to trap me, keep me in a tunnel. His bitterness against me was like bad breath and lasted for life. I could never understand it. He just hated my guts. His father was my mother's brother, but his father was not in the least like my mother.

The world was like that, made of people who couldn't stand each other. As a German friend of mine says about the Holocaust, the world is full of unanswerable questions. I was just beginning to try some out. As the years mounted, I was happiest when I was alone, reading, and starting to note in my school notebook what I thought of the books I was always reading. I was getting used to being with people and yet not being with them. I was my father all over again. Somehow, I knew that there would be trouble ahead, that I would pay for this cherished solitude.



SIMONE WEIL

She said that the only real question to be asked of another is "What are you going through?"

WHILE the revolt of the Warsaw Ghetto, in 1943, was being put down and the ghetto closed, the survivors were pulled out of their houses and deported to Treblinka and to labor camps. Some escaped only by throwing themselves from their flaming houses to death in the street below. Poles on the other side of the ghetto wall stood around laughing and cheering.

This is my most searing image not so much of the terrible war—there were even ghastlier scenes—as of the division that runs through life, marks each of us as nothing else does, and explains why life never really changes. In the end, everything becomes a question of personal experience that you cannot share, whatever your love for the other and your magnanimous ideas about anything and everything. The sheer physical difference, the uncrossed line between actors and bystanders, stage and audience, doers and onlookers, women and men, the work of art and its profuse commentators, the judged and the judge, the hanged and the hangman, the afflicted and their comforters, the young and the old, the fiercely alive and the merely watchful—between the glowing act of love and everything said about it!

Simone Weil said that the only real question to be asked of another is "What are you going through?" And another, even more fiercely independent Jew: "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation." No, it doth not. I know this as a critic of other people's books, as a tiresome moralist even to myself of other people's habits and choices, as a spectator, merely, wandering New York all my life in constant amazement at the number of people walking briskly alone talking to themselves, glowering as they sit alone on park benches, loudly adopting attitudes as they talk to make a point, then just as surely drooping away from this make-believe height as soon as the imaginary others are gone.

Science, seeking confirmation, proof, and objective testing, cannot avail itself of this cardinal human loneliness, but literature can. And this with language that is always failing and stumbling, breaking the writer's heart with its mere approximateness to the thing in his mind. Besides, language is always asserting its primitive authority—is a halting servant but can be a terrible master. Science progresses all the time, literature never. How should it "improve" over the centuries when its very subject is the enigma, the inaccessibility of the human condition? In Henry James's story "The Beast in the Jungle," the beast is the fear that is always threatening us. The final act, when it comes, will be to show us where the failure of our expectation lay. The fall of man is only too real when it comes to ourselves.

But that is a marvellous fable, isn't it, coming from a writer-virgin, who acted in life only by writing, who had left his own country behind while hardly finding one in England's upper classes, who became part of England only by changing his citizenship after England went to war in 1914? Yet Henry James manages now to make his reader feel like an accomplice. He proved that, whatever his withdrawals as a man, his valor as a writer was enough—and overreaching. The mere spectator transcended himself by plowing to the depths, in a hundred European hotels, the exceptionality of his own condition. He probably never read "Moby-Dick," but he would have understood Ahab saying "How can the prisoner reach outside except by thrusting through the wall?" James himself, in old age: "The port from which I set out was, I think, that of *the essential loneliness of my life.*" ♦

MERCE AT SEVENTY-FIVE

BY CALVIN TOMKINS

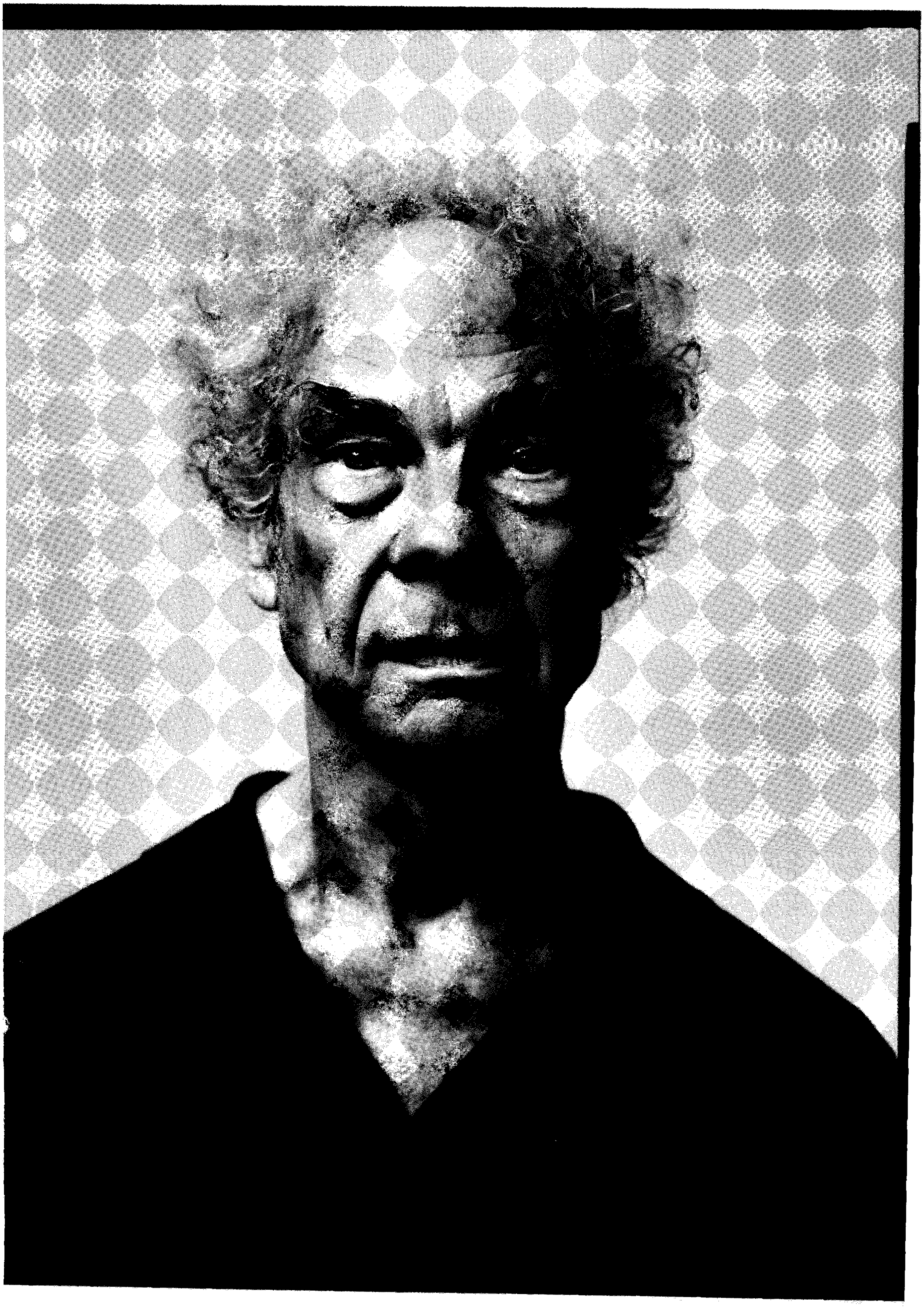
MERCE CUNNINGHAM made his New York stage début in December of 1939 as a soloist with the Martha Graham company, dancing the role of the Acrobat in "Every Soul Is a Circus." In 1944, he began giving annual New York recitals of his own choreography, with music by John Cage, his lifelong collaborator, and in 1953 he formed his first company of dancers. He has been making dances ever since—a hundred and sixty-one to date, and still counting.

Cunningham's seventy-fifth birthday is being celebrated this month with a "special salute" by his great admirer Mikhail Baryshnikov, whose White Oak Dance Project will perform Cunningham's 1970 work "Signals" at the New York State Theatre on March 1st. Meanwhile, Cunningham has his own company's New York season to prepare for—two weeks at the City Center, starting March 8th—and he's also working on a "huge" (his word), ninety-minute piece called "Ocean," whose première is scheduled for mid-May in Brussels.

The sound for "Ocean" is being done in part on a computer, according to a plan worked out by Cage before his death, in 1992. As is usual in a Cunningham piece, the dancers will probably hear it for the first time when they are onstage during the première. The separation of the dance and the music in Cunningham's work doesn't seem to distress audiences anymore, and their acceptance of it is one indication of how he has changed them. "I have a story about that," he said the other day. "Years ago, I gave two or three dances one evening in some small place on Martha's Vineyard. There was no music at all. Afterward, a lady in the audience came up and asked how could I possibly do this dancing without music, because there was no rhythm. At that particular moment, in this funny, dark little place, a gorgeous moth flew in and began moving in the most spectacular way around the one light. And I just pointed." ♦

PHOTOGRAPHS BY RICHARD AVEDON

Mikhail Baryshnikov and Merce Cunningham, in New York City, February 7, 1994.



FICTION

DIZZY

BY TOM DRURY

It was a hot, dusty summer day in New Hampshire. Mary and Paul Emmons were having lunch in a diner called Happy's. Looking out the window, Mary noticed a dog in a car in the parking lot with his head turned upside down.

"What's the matter with that dog?" said Mary.

"Where?" said Paul.

She touched the glass. "Down there."

"I don't see it."

"I don't think it has enough air to breathe."

"I don't see a dog."

Paul and Mary were in their late thirties. They were natives of the United States who had lived in Belgium for the last six years. Before that, they had owned a house in Somerville, Massachusetts, where Paul had been an accountant. Then he was indicted, and ended up testifying in a well-publicized criminal trial, for which the federal government made him a protected witness.

When the trial was over, it was decided that the Emmonses would move to Belgium. Mary had relatives there, whom she had visited during her childhood summers. Mary and Paul ended up living and working in a modest hotel in the Ardennes. Mary managed the inn, and Paul kept the books, and between them they had to perform every sort of hotel duty with the exception of maintaining the electrical wiring. It felt like and was a life in exile. Paul had more guilty knowledge than Mary, but Mary had some. She was not a C.P.A., but she understood numbers.

They had been warned never to come back to New England, but this was the third time that they had done so. The urge to return is great among protected witnesses, and the more Paul and Mary came back the less threatened they felt. They drove through their old neighborhood in rented Ford Escorts with their arms hanging out of the windows. They visited Paul's family in Medford. They were not hassled. They neither made a show of their presence nor tried to hide it. The way they saw it, no one cared about them enough to hurt them. In the movies it always seems that the members of criminal organizations have nothing better to do than track down and shoot turncoat accountants, but in the Emmonses' experience the opposite was true.

During their rare visits to the States, though, Paul and Mary found it difficult to get along with Paul's family. His mother and father, and especially his aunts and uncles and cousins, seemed both jealous of Mary's Belgian relatives and hostile to Mary and Paul themselves. In fact, Paul's family had never really cared for Mary, who, even before her exile among French speakers, had sometimes lapsed into French for no apparent reason. And Paul had, after all, cast a substantial cloud over the family by breaking the law and then informing on people who had once called him their friend. After a week of visiting Paul's relatives in the Boston suburbs, Paul and Mary were always more than ready to escape to New Hampshire, where they owned forty acres of meadows and softwoods not far from Carr Mountain and the Polar Caves.

They looked at menus silently and ordered lunch. Mary let her attention drift out the window.

"There he is," she said. "There's that dog again. You can only see him when he's on this side of the car."

Paul looked. He saw a tan dog whose neck was twisted so that the bottom of the jaw was pointing almost straight up. The dog seemed to be staggering in circles. It would climb up on the passenger seat again and again, only to stumble down onto the floorboard each time.

"He doesn't look very good," Paul conceded.

"He must be suffocating."

"We don't know that, Mary."

By the time their food came, some other people in the diner had gathered around the window, so the dog's predicament was less easy for Paul to dismiss. A thin man in a Red Sox cap spoke up loudly to ask if the driver of the car—a gray Audi with a Princeton sticker in the back window—was in the diner. There was no answer.

"I can't believe some of these people," said a blond woman who held a pack of cigarettes in one hand and a lighter in the other. "You don't leave a dog with the windows rolled up in heat like this."

"It isn't right," said an old man whom some of the others had referred to as Judge, although he did not look like a member of the judiciary.

"And they're from Princeton," added the thin man.

"They have education, all right, but no common sense," said the woman who gripped her smoking materials like pistols.

"You know it, Bonnie," said the old man. "Some people are so smart they just freeze up—don't know how to act."

"That poor animal," said Mary. She and Paul tried to go back to their food, but all they could think about was the suffering dog. They left ten dollars on the table and went out of the diner and down a set of stairs to the parking lot. The windows of the Audi were shut, the doors locked. The car had been washed not long ago, and its gleaming charcoal surface, dusted with fine sand, seemed especially closed to them. Paul and Mary stood and stared at the dog, who continued his hypnotic climbing and falling, and whose ear, they could now see, was turned inside out.

"He seems drunk," said Paul.

"Of course he does," said Mary. "Liquor cuts the flow of oxygen to the brain. Oh, Paul, the poor dog! He can't breathe! He can't breathe, and now he's going to die."

"I don't understand. Why doesn't he just pass out?"

"He will, if we stand here long enough," said Mary. "And then he will die."

Paul dried his palms on the sides of his jeans. "There must be a tire iron in our car. Or a lug wrench."

Mary ran to the car and returned with the tire iron. Paul hefted it while looking at the smooth glass of the Audi's rear window. What would a sensible person do? A swing of the tire iron would either save the dog's life or simply break the window of an expensive car with a grotesque dog inside. Perhaps the dog had rabies and would jump out and bite them. Perhaps bits of glass would fly into the dog's eyes, adding blindness to its many other problems.

Paul looked at Mary, who nodded her encouragement. "*Vogue la galère*," she said.

"Perhaps the dog has rabies," said Paul.

Just then, a short man with an apron and a beard ran down the steps into the parking lot. "Wait, mister," he said. "I'm Happy."

"Excuse me?" said Paul.

"They call me Happy. I run the diner."

"Oh, I see."

"I think I know where you can find these people," said Happy. "They're probably down the street at L'Embarras du Choix. That's another restaurant—they serve French food—and they're not supposed to use this parking lot, but a lot of times they do anyway. No, I don't like it, but there you are. Not a blessed thing I can do about it. It might be worth a try before you smash out the window."

"Hurry," said Mary.

Paul ran down the street of the New Hampshire town. There were young trees planted along the sidewalk, but they did not seem to be thriving. He arrived at the French restaurant and stood panting before two wooden doors with insets of etched glass. He did not want to go in, because he knew what he would find—people with money. He had tried, once upon a time, to get money himself, and instead had been relegated to a tumbledown inn in Belgium. Shortly before this trip, he had experienced a strange moment of self-awareness. He had been pouring Liquid Drāno into a sink, scratching his stomach, and looking absently out the window at cows standing in the Ardennes rain. Suddenly, he had the unreal feeling that he had been doing these things throughout eternity—pouring, scratching, looking. And now, waiting to enter the restaurant, he felt as if the patrons, when they looked at him, would not see a hero trying to save the life of a dog but someone frozen ludicrously in time with a can of Drāno in his hand. He pushed open the doors. The tables were covered with brown velvet, and set with thin-stemmed glasses and candles. A man in a red jacket came to say that Paul could not come in wearing tennis shoes.

Paul pushed past him. "Excuse me, folks, excuse me," he said. "There is an Audi parked down the street with a Princeton decal on the window and a dog inside. I am looking for the owner of this car."

A man at a corner table stood and smiled. He had short silver hair and an oddly cut canvas jacket with green suède shoulders. "I have an Audi."

"You have to come see the dog," said Paul. "There's something terribly wrong with him."

"Yes, that's what he's like," said the man.

Paul stared at him. He heard people whispering.

"His head is upside down," said Paul.

"Rusty has a problem with his head. . . . What of it?" The man laughed quietly, and so did the woman he was with. She was beautiful, wearing a simple white dress, and seemed to regard Paul as a minor distraction. Now Paul heard condescending laughter from other tables.

It was the very sort of class antagonism that Paul had anticipated. "You left the windows up," he said. "You didn't even crack them. You can't leave a dog without air." He felt that he should add some profanity, so he said, "God damn it." Then he continued. "It may be air-conditioned in here, but outside it's almost ninety degrees. Meanwhile you got a mob of people about to knock out the windows of your car. You'd better come with me."

Paul walked back to the diner with the man, whose name was Raymond. It was hot again in the sun. Raymond lit a pipe and could not be hurried. It was possible that by now Mary had broken the window and discovered that the dog was not, after all, suffering from oxygen deprivation. Paul hoped that the window was intact. He hoped someone cautious had taken charge of the tire iron.

"I don't mind explaining the situation to you or anyone else," said Raymond. "But I'm really quite sure the dog is fine. I mean, for heaven's sake, we've only been in the restaurant for half an hour."

"In a case like this, you've got to leave some ventilation."

Raymond nodded. The pipe went up and down. "No, you're right. But it isn't like the car is airtight. I drive around with the windows closed. I don't suffocate."

"That's different," said Paul. "The car is in motion."

Raymond shrugged.

"Where are you from?" said Paul.

"Maryland."

"What is wrong with the dog?"

"It's a condition of the inner ear. We believe there was an infection that went unchecked when he was a pup. You see, we weren't the dog's first owners. We picked him at the Animal Guild in Bethesda. He had arrived at the Guild in much the same shape as you see him in today. The thing is, Rusty enjoys

"He's from Texas."

HE CONSIDERS THE BIRDS OF THE AIR

(MATTHEW 8:20)

We get up at six with him and build a fire.
Against a choir of straight second-growth woods
on a morning when the thermometer stands
at zero, he considers the birds of the air.

They hop down and again hop down to the feeder
beyond the window for the black sunflower seeds
or the suet's white shoulder, a traffic of chickadees
to which cardinals and pine grosbeaks add color.

His man-in-the-moon face, his eyes of cracked sapphire
reflect necessity in that repeated
motion. An infant gazes at some birds,
and for a moment it all balances there,

unblinking, calm, until the slightest feather
of snow, knocked free by a breeze, drifts toward
the ground, past curtains hospitably patterned
in red-and-blue chintz pineapples: mute glitter,

crystal fusillade. He will have nowhere
to lay his head, no matter how he builds,
no matter how he watches where unnumbered
small creatures have their being in the weather.

—KARL KIRCHWEY

travelling. Although I admit he can be disturbing to watch. It's a problem for us. Many people want to know what's wrong, what's wrong with Rusty."

Paul and Raymond arrived at the diner, and as they crossed the parking lot Paul for some reason recalled walking up the courthouse steps with his lawyer back in 1987. He was so tired of federal agents and their bad jokes by then that he had welcomed the uncertain prospect of beginning again, with a new name and no friends. The future was open for him and Mary, as it had been when they were first married. This was the thought that he held in his mind while testifying. No one could understand why he ratted on the other people in the illegal enterprise with such enthusiasm.

About a dozen people had gathered in the parking lot to argue the merits of assaulting the Audi in order to save the dog. Mary seemed to be the still center of the commotion. She looked calm and angelic in her yellow summer dress. Paul took her hand as Raymond made his way to the car. Raymond opened the door, put a leash on Rusty, and led him out onto the pavement—all while continuing to smoke his pipe.

"You see?" said Raymond. "He is quite fine. Aren't you, Rusty?"

The dog was friendly enough, and his deformities and falling seemed less pitiful when they were known not to be life-threatening. Still, the people were not satisfied. It was the wrong outcome. They almost wanted to go ahead and break the car windows anyway. The elderly man whom everyone called Judge led the way back into the diner. He turned at the top of the stairs. "Maybe there's no harm this time," he said. "But it is wrong to treat a dog that way."

Raymond walked Rusty for a while longer, rolled down the windows of the car a bit, and shut the dog inside again. When Paul and Mary drove away from the diner, they saw Raymond walking back to L'Embarras du Choix. He waved. They waved back. They headed for their motel.

"How do you feel?" said Paul.

"Tired," said Mary. "Just very tired."

They showered, and then fell asleep on a hard, flat bed in a room with varnished wooden walls and a painting of a woman holding a big basket of cherries.

BETWEEN legal fees and fines, the trial had cost Paul and Mary their savings, their car, and their house in Somerville. The acreage in New Hampshire was all they had been able to keep. The title had been transferred to Paul's cousin Lane, who had committed suicide some years before by jumping from a bridge in California. If this ghost transfer were ever discovered—which it wouldn't be, thanks to the skillful way in which Paul had set it up, and the laissez-faire attitude of the town clerk involved—they would lose the forty acres, too. So they had the land but couldn't do much with it, except to show up once in a blue moon, get a motel room nearby, and traipse through the trees and tall grass for a few days before flying back to Europe.

After waking from their nap, Paul and Mary went for a drive. They picked up beer and hummus sandwiches on the way out of town. A quarter mile past an auction house where they had never seen any signs of life, they turned onto a sand road that wound its way through dark evergreens and up into the hills. At the crest of the road Paul parked the car, and they got out. This was their land. They followed a trail into the trees, which eventually gave way to a wide golden meadow from which mountains could be seen, miles away. There were no buildings left on the land, just tall grass and wildflowers, and here and there an iron ring or a scrap of farm machinery. At the edge of the meadow stood the decomposing skeleton of a truck. Everything that was not metal had disappeared. The doors were bent and wide open. Paul and Mary spread a blanket on the grass by the truck and sat down. No matter how hot it became, there was always a breeze here.

Paul opened two bottles of beer and passed one to Mary. They drank deeply and looked at the scenery. "You know what I'm thinking?" said Paul after a time. "That dog could have got out of this truck without any trouble at all."

Mary closed her eyes and smiled sadly. "But what would we have done all afternoon?" she said. ♦

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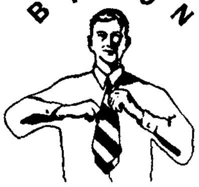

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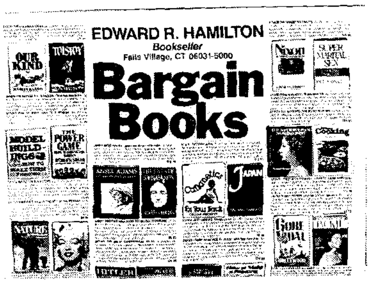

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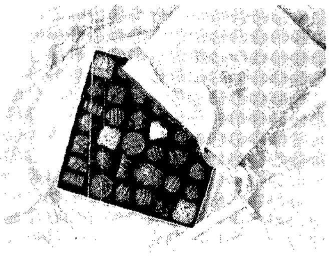

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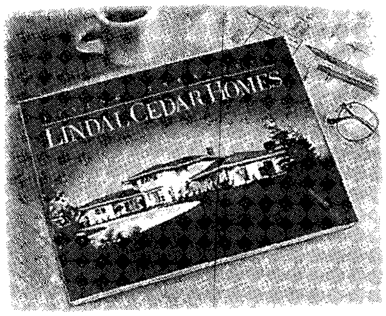

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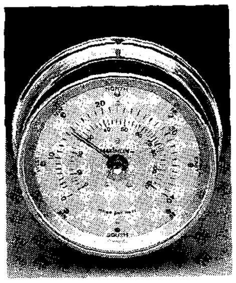

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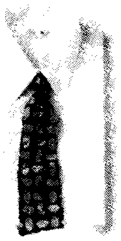

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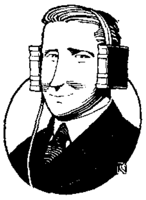

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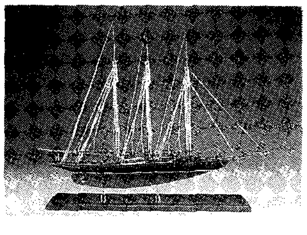

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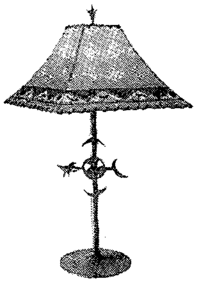

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THE CRITICS

THE SKY LINE

THE SUBURBANITE

BY BRENDAN GILL

THE opening of the exhibit "Frank Lloyd Wright Architect" at the Museum of Modern Art has prompted me to reflect, not for the first time, on one of the central mysteries of Wright's life and work—his ineradicable dislike of cities. What a bizarre state of affairs it is for an architect to hate cities! And the greater the architect, the more bizarre it may seem to us that he should place himself at odds with the very habitat in which an architect is customarily expected to flourish. As I made my way through the MOMA exhibit, with its hundreds of ravishing drawings, photographs, and models—evidence, accumulating decade after decade throughout Wright's exceptionally long and fruitful career, of his vehement antiurban bias—I wondered how many other members of the profession who have attained Wright's high rank in history can be found railing against cities as "a persistent form of social disease" and taking care always to live at what they perceive to be a sanitizing distance from them.

In searching for a possible Wright ally, one thinks at once of Jefferson, who is also the only American architect who in the sweepstakes of architectural fashion is currently running neck and neck with Wright. Jefferson considered all large cities, even his beloved Paris, literally and figuratively pestilential. But after Jefferson, who? It is hard to imagine Wren not living in London, Borromini not living in Rome, Gaudí not living in Barcelona. Jefferson in his sunny pavilion on a hilltop in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia, Wright under the broad gables of Taliesin on a lesser hilltop at Spring Green, Wisconsin—as country gentlemen they cut handsome figures indeed, but as our most gifted architects what on earth were they doing in such remote, unpeopled landscapes, where the only visible structures were ones that had been designed by them?

The more one reflects on Wright's prejudice against cities, the more mysterious it becomes. Wright was always quick to call architecture the mother of the arts, and surely the likeliest home for the arts is in the heart of a densely populated city, and not in some empty upland pasture. Moreover, it was in responding to problems of design as they emerged from the founding and growth of cities that architecture came to assume the dignity of a profession and to be forgiven those habitual impurities in its practice (impurities that Jefferson, as an amateur, was nearly always able to avoid) which have led some commentators to argue, in spite of Wright, that architecture isn't an art at all and, in certain epochs, isn't even much of a profession.

WRIGHT was born in 1867, in the small town of Richland Center, Wisconsin, and grew up in Madison, the state capital, which in his day was a city of modest size. By his late teens, Wright had established a reputation as a perennial dropout from school but had also managed to gain a smattering of technical knowledge from a professor of engineering at the University of Wisconsin, whom he served as a sort of high-class office boy. (In the MOMA show is a carefully executed engineering drawing of a parabola made by Wright at the age of eighteen.) Over the repeated objections of his mother—a cold, half-mad woman, who, newly divorced by his kindly, much put-upon father, intended never to let go of her adorable son—Wright ran away to Chicago to seek his fortune as an apprentice architect.

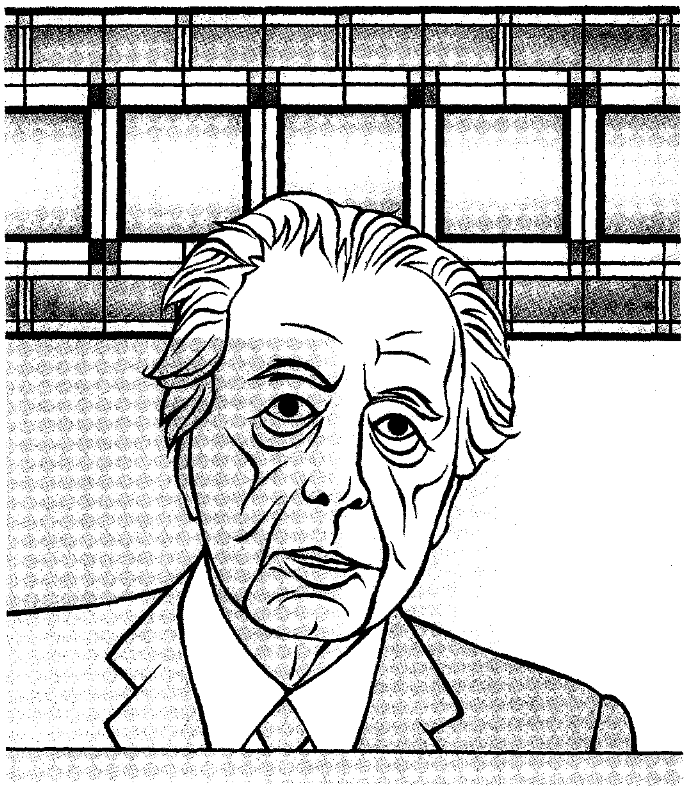
Chicago was then a rip-roaring boomtown for architects: it had been rebuilding itself continuously since its near-destruction in the fire of 1871 and was expanding north and south along the shore of Lake Michigan and westward across the prairie. It was often predicted that Chicago was on its way to becoming the most populous—and therefore the greatest—city in the United States, and its architects were designing and building with a freedom to experiment unknown in the more conservative East.

By 1889, Wright had achieved the impressive position of head draftsman at Adler & Sullivan, one of the leading architectural firms in the city. At that moment, Wright and Chicago appeared ideally matched: the man who would eventually be considered the most talented architect ever born in this country was ready—at twenty-two!—to measure himself against the one city in the country that offered a challenge worthy of him. To any onlooker with knowledge of the architectural profession, it would have seemed obvious that Wright's future and that of Chicago were destined to be inextricably linked, to their joint benefit—that Wright would assume a place in the very center of that brawling, noisy, superbly venturesome metropolis and make it over according to his heart's desire.

But something happened. Or, rather, something didn't happen: Wright chose not to step into the center. Curiously enough, the bold gesture of his leaving the unhappy home in Madison had led not to an escape from the tyranny of his mother but to a state of continued subjection to her. Anna Lloyd-Jones Wright, grimly pursuing her prized boy, arranged to install herself and him and his two younger sisters not amid the temptations of wide-open Chicago but in the nearby suburb of Oak Park, which at the time was perhaps the primmest, most proudly respectable middle-class community in the entire United States. Known to mocking outsiders as Saints Rest, it was, one might say, riddled with temperance; being a "dry" town, it contained many churches but no saloons.

Wright neither smoked nor drank and, at twenty-two, had had no sexual experience with women. When, attending a church "social," he met and fell in love with a high-spirited girl named Catherine Tobin, their relationship ought to have provided another opportunity for him to escape from Anna Wright, but it was not to be. To Anna's distress, and to the equal distress of Catherine's parents, the two young virgins insisted upon marrying (the ceremony was a disaster: Anna Wright took care to faint, and the bride's father was in tears), and then the couple moved into a pretty little house in Oak Park, designed by Wright and paid for with the help of a substantial loan from Louis Sullivan. As for Anna Wright and her daughters, they moved into a cottage next door, from which Anna was able to maintain a constant watch on the comings and goings of the newlyweds and then of the large family—six children in all—that they set about improvidently hurling into the world.

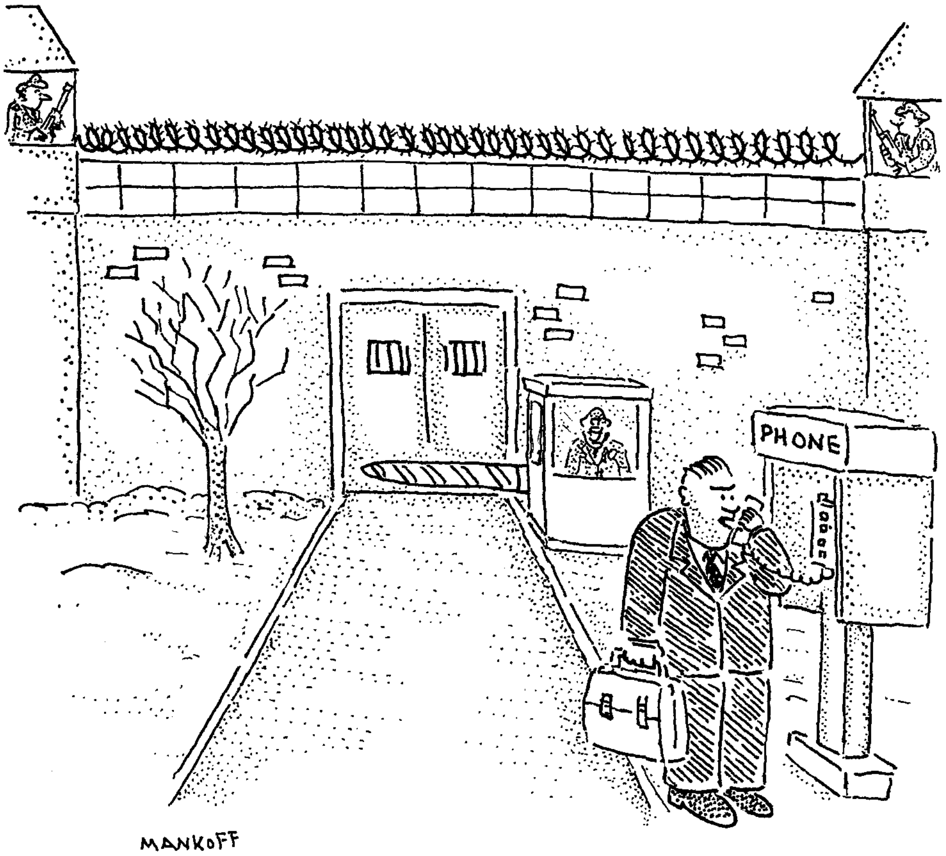
I have noted elsewhere that, given the great age that Wright attained and the many twists and turns his career underwent, we tend to think of his years of domesticity with Catherine and the children in Oak Park as amounting to a comparatively brief episode. The fact is that the episode embraced what for many people amounts to an adult lifetime: almost twenty years. The scrupulously detailed MOMA survey, which is laid out in chronological order, makes clear what prodigies of creative labor Wright carried out during this period, beginning with the establishment of his private practice after the nasty—and still largely unexplained—falling out with Sullivan. There was the design of the early Prairie houses, which in fact had everything to do with the suburbs and nothing to do with the prairie; the first visits to Japan; and the construction of those pioneering masterpieces—the Larkin Company headquarters building, in Buffalo, and the Unity Temple, in Oak Park—from which we are able to judge the close attention that Wright was paying to the experiments of the Viennese Secessionists and other European architects.


One of the central mysteries of Frank Lloyd Wright's life remains: Why did he hate cities?

The ever more astonishing professional wizardry of the man aside, what was keeping him content, or seemingly content, with the toy life of suburbia? And when he, in 1909, at last abandoned it, leaving Catherine and the children behind under the eye of and at the mercy of his dragonish mother, why did the occasion for this abandonment—purportedly his need to supervise an edition of his works that the Berlin publisher Wasmuth was bringing out, but in actuality a scandalous elopement to Europe with Mamah Cheney, the wife of an Oak Park neighbor and friend—prove to be less a decisive break with his conventional past than a messy, unsuccessful continuation of it?

Even in running off with Mamah, Wright proved incurably domestic. I am only half joking when I suggest that it was the suburbanite in Wright that prompted him, on arriving in Italy with Mamah, to seek quarters not in Florence itself but in nearby Fiesole, where, in a pleasing little villa with a walled garden, the couple set up housekeeping along with Wright's firstborn son, Lloyd, then nineteen, and Taylor Woolley, a favorite Oak Park draftsman. Lloyd Wright and Woolley were there to help complete the drawings for the Wasmuth edition while the intellectually ambitious Mamah busied herself with translating Goethe.

On returning to the States after that gypsy year abroad, Wright found, to his astonishment, that Catherine was unwilling to give him a divorce. By then, Anna Wright was convinced that Mamah represented less of a threat to her relationship with her son than the stubborn Catherine did; using her own small savings, she conspired with Frank to buy some property in Spring Green adjoining that of her Lloyd-Jones brothers and sisters, and to pretend that the house he set about building there would be for her and his elderly aunts. Of course, it was nothing of the kind; it was the nucleus of the grand country estate that he had it in mind to construct for himself and Mamah, which would serve, in effect, as his formal declaration of independence



"Yeah, I just got out, and I want to focus on crime again."

• •

from cities—a declaration that was transformed, by its strident repetition in countless newspaper and magazine interviews, into a declaration of open war. On being asked in Pittsburgh what ought to be done to improve the city architecturally, he replied, "Tear it down." As for the especially detested New York, Wright would ask, "Who founded New York City? It was Cain, wasn't it? Cain was the founder of the city after he murdered his brother Abel . . . and it is here yet."

Commanding an army of workmen, Wright had built the immense stone walls and overhanging roofs of Taliesin as a fortress that in his eyes embodied the Lloyd-Jones family motto, "Truth against the world." Henceforth, however much professional work Wright might consent to carry out in cities, clients seeking his services would be obliged to travel at considerable inconvenience by train or automobile to "the valley of the God-Almighty Joneses" and wait upon the great man there. He was still in his early forties and had almost half a century to live. Taliesin was to be twice burned and twice rebuilt, with an accompaniment of tragedy that included, in 1914, Mamah's murder and that of her two children by a crazed servant who was about to be discharged. In the thirties, still another Taliesin arose—this one in the Arizona desert, where Wright and his family and a band of fee-paying apprentices habitually spent their winters. During the half-century that Wright presided over his two Taliesins, what a succession of masterly projects, public and private, large and small, built and unbuilt, he ushered into the world! And all seemingly with so little effort! As Wright himself used to say, borrowing an old Viennese saying that had been a favorite of Josef Hoffmann's, "I just shake them out of my sleeve."

IT is the inherent defect of any exhibition of architecture, however thorough, that the primary experience of architecture—our being able to move through volumes of space calculated to produce in us a certain pleasurable physical response—cannot be reproduced in a museum setting. When we attend an exhibition of an artist's paintings, we are in immediate contact with his handiwork: the maker of the paintings is both intensely absent (he may have been dead for a hundred years) and intensely present. When it comes to architecture, the works themselves are, of course, elsewhere, and even the images of them that can be gathered together for our instruction and enjoyment bear the taint of a purpose not intrinsically aesthetic: however beautiful they may happen to be, it was their utility that brought them into existence, which is to say that a winsome perspective drawing was the means by which a client was persuaded to build such and such a structure; working drawings of elevations and sections were the means by which a contractor was enabled to erect the structure; and photographs were the means by which the structure entered history and was able to survive the effects of decay, alteration, and, often enough, demolition.

Since it was bound to be the case, there is no reason to feel disappointed by the absence from the "Frank Lloyd Wright Architect" show of the physical experience of penetrating (not without difficulty in many instances) a Wright building. Nevertheless, the originators of the exhibition—Terence Riley, the chief curator of the Department of Architecture and Design at MOMA, and Peter Reed, the assistant curator of the department—have done their best to provide ingenious substitute experiences in three dimensions, in the form of some thirty handsomely executed scale models and of several mockups of Wright's structural innovations in wood, glass, and concrete block.

It is by way of those scale models that I return to my initial statement about the mystery of Wright's antagonism to cities. For the models reveal, far better than any drawings or photographs, the degree to which Wright, when he was obliged to build in a city, sought always to seal his buildings off from the environment they were necessarily a part of. As early as in his designs for the Larkin Building and for Unity Temple, constructed shortly after the turn of the century (both buildings owed much to Olbrich's Kunst Haus, in Vienna), Wright was bent upon creating structures at odds with their settings, and even with their proposed functions. As the office headquarters of a mail-order business, the Larkin Building, handsome though it certainly was, proved highly inefficient. As for Unity Temple, when Wright's friend and colleague George Elmslie suggested that with certain minor alterations the building could serve equally well as a bank, Wright said, "I don't give a damn what the use of it is; I wanted to build a building like that."

According to my appraisal of them, the scale models at MOMA manifest over the decades a continuously ascending degree of antiurban bias in the designs that Wright was so eagerly shaking out of his sleeve. For the Johnson Wax Company administration building, in Racine, Wright provided an interior environment in which any clue to the weather, the seasons, or even the time of day was rigorously suppressed. In an extreme example of his habitual hostility, Wright had attempted to talk Hib Johnson, the head of the company, into constructing the new building well outside of town, because of the town's inexpungible ugliness. (Racine is in fact a pleasant-looking little city, perched on a scenic bluff above Lake Michigan.) Johnson rejected the suggestion, but Wright made sure that no glimpse of Racine was readily available either from the administration building or from the ten-story laboratory tower that he designed for the company a few years later. (The laboratories proved unworkable, and the tower has been shut for decades.)

Several of the projects of Wright's old age expressed with unabated fervor his low opinion of cities. I think, for example, of the Rogers Lacy Hotel, in Dallas, which, though unbuilt, was the acknowledged forerunner of all those Portman-designed hotels (along with uncounted hundreds of imitation-Portman hotels) opening inward upon a gorgeous atrium many stories high, and evoking not Main Street but the Arabian Nights. I think, too, of the Beth Sholom Synagogue, in Elkins Park, Pennsylvania, which, in defiance of Wright's early insistence that a building should be *of* a hill but not *on* it, leaps boldly skyward from the crest of a hill and rejects any contact with the suburban residential district that it was presumably intended to serve. It is distressing enough that the synagogue should misuse a single hilltop in Elkins Park; still worse is the fashion in which the Marin County Civic Center (completed after Wright's death) crushingly obliterates *two* hilltops and, with its almost endlessly repeated arches and its vast blue dome, puts us, to our bewilderment, simultaneously in mind of the Roman Pont du Gard and of all those domes on government buildings that Wright in his youth incessantly derided.

Still, the most intense expression of Wright's dislike of cities is the Guggenheim Museum, here in the city that Cain founded. Wright liked to describe the Guggenheim as "my little pavilion in a park," but he was well aware that there had never been any hope of its being built in Central Park. It was obliged to stand across the street from the Park, and as Wright had first designed it the building bore an even more awkward relationship to its site than it does today: it was designed to be squeezed between two limestone neo-Renaissance mansions that, rising at either end of the block, would have held Wright's "upside-down ziggurat" in the most reluctant of embraces. To this day, the Guggenheim Museum violates the comity of the long street-wall of Fifth Avenue; it is assuredly a remarkable feat of architecture, and we are fortunate to possess it, but it is also assuredly among the least appropriate buildings ever to rise in a city crammed with inappropriate buildings—most of which, however, to strike a forgiving note, were designed out of a misguided sense of civic pride. Only the Guggenheim was designed out of contempt for the city in which it stands.

SO there we are! The greatest of our architects hated cities—perhaps even, as I have hinted without documentation, feared them—but why? Whence that lifelong animus against the likeliest source of an architect's inspiration, the likeliest place in which he can hope to fulfill his gifts? The mystery remains intact, and it is one that visitors to MOMA, passing from gallery to gallery and from one prodigious feat of architecture to the next, will do well to keep in mind as Wright imposes on them his mighty presence. He is an enigma, and he is also, as he was in life, irresistible. We do not let him go, and he does not let us go. ♦

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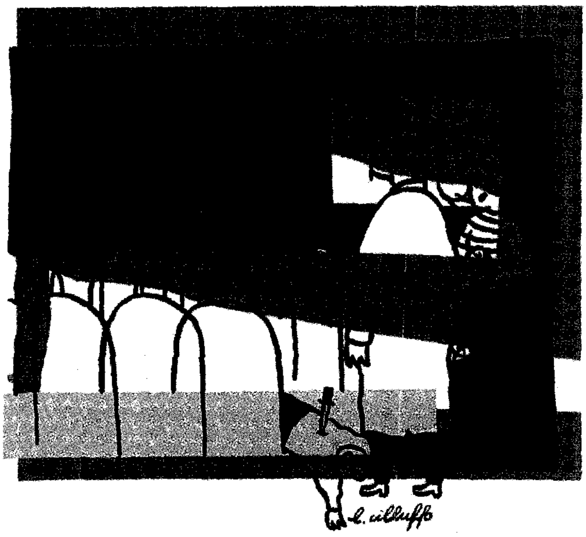

BEN STILLER'S "Reality Bites" is a romantic comedy about what has come to be called Generation X (after Douglas Coupland's 1991 novel). The label is meant to designate a large subculture of white middle-class kids born after the baby boom, who now, as they enter adulthood, feel cheated by history: the boomers had all the fun, in the sixties, and then they took all the good jobs and basked in their media-fed sense of cultural superiority. The characters in "Reality Bites" are just out of college, and they're not thrilled about their prospects: they're overeducated and underemployed, and, worse, their disillusionment isn't winning them any sympathy (much less practical help) from their elders—no one appears to know, or care, what they're going through. The entertainment industry, however, knows that these kids are out there, because they've been spending millions of dollars on "alternative" rock music. "Reality Bites," which was funded by a major studio, is Hollywood's attempt—belated, as usual—to acknowledge the existence of a new and distinctive generational sensibility; or, more precisely, to cash in on whatever it is that compels young people to fork over their joylessly earned money for Nirvana or Pearl Jam.

If the members of Generation X are as skeptical and as alienated as they're cracked up to be, they'll smell the con, bag the movie, and save up for the next Lollapalooza tour instead. In some strange way, though, the most appreciative audience for "Reality Bites" might be the most irredeemable slackers: hard-core nihilists, drawn to the multiplex on a slow TV night, could get a few cheap laughs out of the movie's transparent eagerness to flatter them. That is to say, they'll enjoy the same sort of low, adolescent-cynical pleasure that members of my generation derived from Hollywood's desperate attempts to tap into the counterculture ethos of the sixties; the glossy inanity of pictures like "The Strawberry Statement" and "Che!" (with Omar Sharif) provided hilarious evidence of the cluelessness of the establishment. The studios' buffoonish, lunging embraces of grooviness also had the heady—and, as we later discovered, illusory—effect of confirming our sense of our own power: it seemed as if we had transformed our middle-aged enemies into grovelling suitors, so intent on winning our approval that they couldn't even tell what jackasses they were making of themselves.

The target audience for "Reality Bites" will probably not experience this sensation of triumph to quite the same degree, because the people who are in charge of the studios now go in for a much more sophisticated style of hucksterism than their sixties counterparts, whose unsavory intentions were touchingly obvious: when one of those expensive counterculture-exploitation pictures flopped, the thoroughness of the failure had a nice, sordid inevitability to it, like a flashbulb photograph of a sweaty, startled adulterer caught with his pants down in a ratty motel room. Today's executives don't sweat (except under the supervision of their personal trainers) and their courtship of the young is so smoothly executed that it's difficult to catch them in an unambiguously compromising position. The maddening thing about "Reality Bites" is that it isn't blatantly fake. Stiller's direction gives the picture an appropriately loose, drifting rhythm; the settings—mostly dark, cluttered interiors—feel right for the characters, whose typical response to the rigors of the real world is to retreat to the womblike comfort of student squalor. And Winona Ryder, in the central role, has a fresh, natural style that makes even the most contrived dialogue sound effortlessly authentic; she confers on the movie authority that it doesn't really deserve. Throughout, the film sustains a tantalizing tone of semi-conviction. Not everyone involved in "Reality Bites" appears to be aware that it's an exploitation picture; even the executives who green-lighted it may half believe that they're in love with the young, not merely trying to get into bed with them.

What gives the game away is an awkward disjunction between the movie's manner and its substance. The script, by Helen Childress, is packed with knowing pop-culture references, and the soundtrack is filled with the music of college-radio favorites (World Party, Juliana Hatfield, Dinosaur Jr., Crowded House, Arrested Development, and many, many more). But the story, stripped of this hip ornamentation, is as familiar and as conventional as a romantic-comedy plot can be. The heroine, Lelaina (Ryder), is torn between two admirers, one of them ardent and respectable and dull (Michael, a music-television junior executive, played by Stiller), and the other a cooler, sexier, more "dangerous" type (Troy, a scruffy, underachieving musician, played by Ethan Hawke). This is a classic Hollywood setup, in which the female star bounces fetchingly, for ninety minutes, from Ralph Bellamy to Cary Grant and back again and winds up, inevitably, in the arms of the riskier but more exciting guy. (Childress, following the thirties formula dutifully, also provides her heroine with a world-weary, low-voiced sidekick, played by Janeane Garofalo, whose function is to season the bland romance with wisecracks, in the manner of, say, Joan Blondell.) The picture's ragged, casual exposition might

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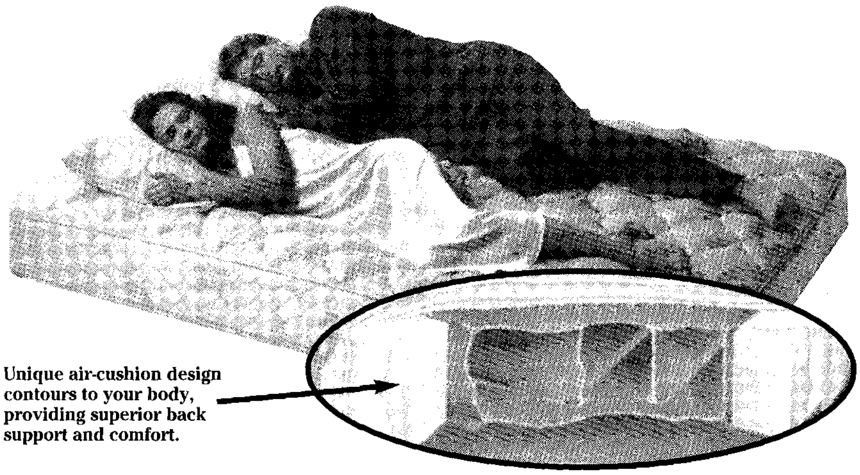

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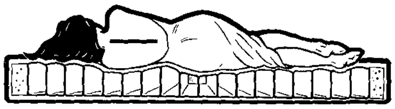

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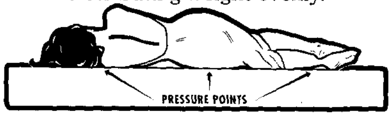

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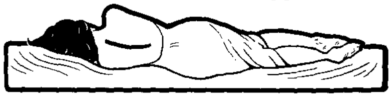

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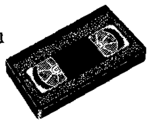

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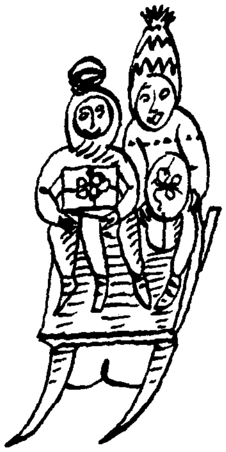
persuade you, for a while, that there's something new and interesting going on here, but "Reality Bites" loses its seductive anti-momentum pretty quickly. Before half an hour has passed, the trash-culture allusiveness of the characters' conversations becomes overbearingly thick, and we begin to suspect that all the talk about "The Brady Bunch" and Big Gulps and "Melrose Place" is actually designed to work as a kind of synthetic-idiom recipe—a mixture of junk-food additives meant to distract us from the poor quality of the meat. And, when the thin romance plot finally kicks in, our suspicions grow stronger.

It's almost always a mistake to present a movie to young people as a portrait of their generation. But the studios—thinking, undoubtedly, about freak hits like "Easy Rider" and "Saturday Night Fever"—keep trying anyway. Hitting the Zeitgeist just right can unleash an unstoppable torrent of profits: first, movie admissions, then CD sales, then video rentals, and on and on into the green distance. They're working on two fronts now: violent inner-city melodramas for the hip-hop culture, and stoned, slightly funky ensemble comedies for Generation X. It would be sentimental, and inaccurate, to assert that kids can't be fooled, but you can't just dump a movie in the theatres and say to them, "You're gonna love this, it's the story of your life." The target audience, justifiably, responds, "Says who?" (That's the polite formulation.) In my generation, the pictures that caught on usually weren't "about" us in any easily identifiable way: "Bonnie and Clyde" and "M*A*S*H" and "Mean Streets" didn't set out to hold a mirror up to the counterculture—and even "Easy Rider" was, for most of us, fairly exotic stuff. If there really is a new sensibility at large among the young, the entertainment-industry predators aren't going to capture it by coming at it head-on, as they do in "Reality Bites." For better or worse, the genre-movie scuzziness of "Reservoir Dogs" is probably a purer expression of Generation X attitudes than "Reality Bites." That's not to say that the filmmakers should have given Ryder and Hawke and Stiller black suits and guns and let them blow one another away. Tapping a youth-culture Zeitgeist isn't a matter of carefully combining proven elements, and, since that's the only way present-day Hollywood knows how to operate, the studios are doomed to produce one clinker after another.

The irony of "Reality Bites" is that it would be a better movie if the filmmakers had lightened up and resigned themselves to making a genial, low-impact romantic comedy in a contemporary setting—if, in other words, they had allowed the picture to be the piece of fluff that it fundamentally is. Cameron Crowe's airy, unpretentious "Singles" (1992) used its Seattle-grunge milieu very deftly, as an atmospheric, lived-in background to the love problems of a youthful ensemble; and by avoiding the temptation to deliver big statements, Crowe managed to put across quite a few surprising, perceptive small ones. "Reality Bites" messes up even its simple thirties-comedy structure in the attempt to turn Troy, the embodiment of the risky-but-irresistible romantic principle, into the definitive slacker hero. Troy's gloomy negativity is supposed to indicate depth, but it's mostly just irritating. As Hawke plays him (charmlessly), the character comes off as a smug, morose putdown artist: Troy acts like a guy who's convinced of his own intellectual superiority, and that's not an attractive type. (It doesn't help that the one-liners meant to demonstrate the keenness of his wit aren't especially funny.) Besides, his behavior toward Lelaina is beastly—it goes far beyond the usual requirements of romantic sparring—so the movie's resolution inadvertently gives us a sinking feeling: the likable heroine has landed a prize jerk. And the movie, which began with bright hopes, ends up in a grim place, too. When the lights go up, you don't feel as if you had shared the experience of a new generation; you feel puzzled and vaguely crummy, as if you had just read a solemn news-magazine cover story about it. ♦



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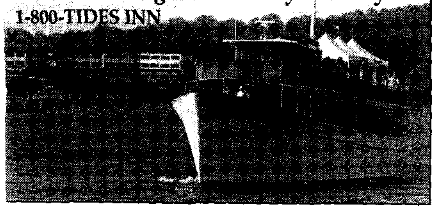
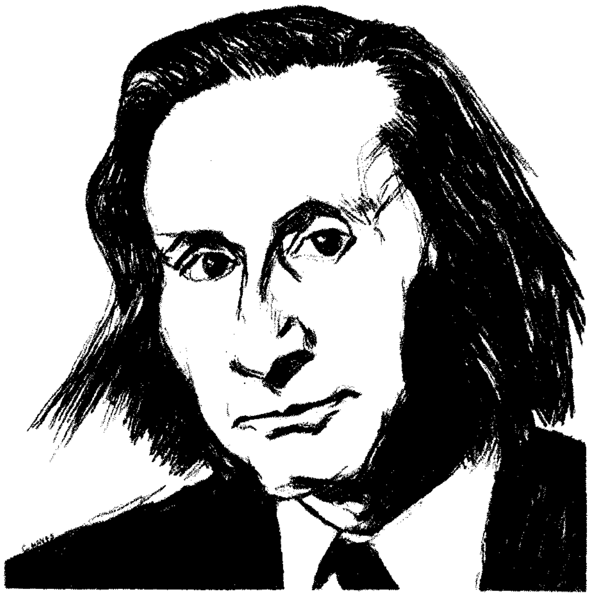


MUSICAL EVENTS

SCHNITTKE'S SEVENTH

BY PAUL GRIFFITHS

THE first time I heard anything by Alfred Schnittke was at the 1971 festival of the International Society for Contemporary Music, in London, when a short, chamber-scale cello concerto, "Dialogue," was played. It seemed at the time a cautious blend of Shostakovich and Schoenberg—a piece that wouldn't have been considered remarkable if it hadn't been written in a Soviet Union culturally stifled since the ejection of Khrushchev, in 1964. We on the outside knew there were other composers swimming against the official stream, and among them Edison Denisov appeared a much more colorful fish, with his background in Stravinsky and Boulez. What we didn't know was that Mr. Schnittke was then in the middle of writing his First Symphony, in which the Shostakovich-Schoenberg style was to be just one possibility in a great Ivesian circus. And what we couldn't know was that his subsequent symphonies, concertos, and chamber works would install him (it happened about a decade later) as the heir to Shostakovich, the musical voice of Russia.



Alfred Schnittke: The heir to Shostakovich. The New York Philharmonic recently gave the première of his Seventh Symphony.

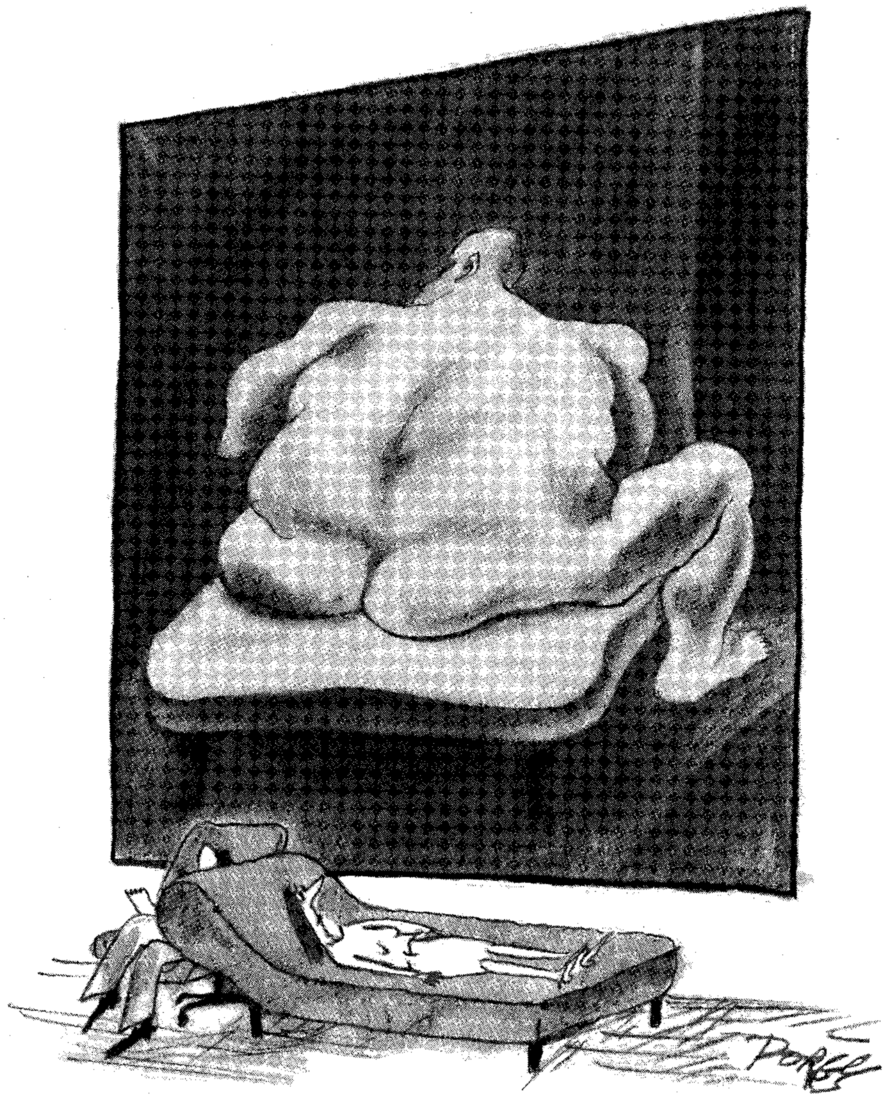
CONNIE HAYES

I'm not sure if Mr. Schnittke was present at that 1971 festival or if memory has taken his image from a black-and-white photograph and placed him there. It easily could have, for even in the indubitable flesh—as he was seen last month, onstage at Avery Fisher Hall, during the Philharmonic's Composer Week—he cuts a painfully exhausted, paled, monochrome figure. I certainly do remember encountering both Mr. Denisov and Mr. Schnittke at a reception at the British Embassy in Moscow in 1986: the former affable, broadly smiling, holding court, the latter standing alone in another room, hunched, in his habitual mid-gray suit, with his back turned—surely much less from discourtesy than from reticence—to deter approach.

Possibly I've held onto these mental pictures because they accord with a preëxisting concept of the music, but what's significant is that we all find ourselves forming such connections, that the music wants to scratch out of us some interpretation in terms of the composer, the conditions of his life, the recent history of Russia, or the decline and fall of Western culture. Kurt Masur, speaking to the audience in Fisher Hall before conducting the first performance of Mr. Schnittke's Seventh Symphony (commissioned by the Philharmonic), referred to the music's "harsh" qualities, and related a poignant anecdote about his first visit to the composer, in 1975, when it was necessary to go at dead of night, because foreign guests weren't allowed at the home of one who declined to sing the Party tune. Mr. Masur's further reference to "hope" in this music wasn't so useful: perhaps the reference was itself a gesture of hope, aimed at persuading the audience that, though it might have to sit through twenty minutes of strenuous discord, all would be well in the final moments. One must also wonder how the invocation of "hope" (it was there, too, in a program article) sounds to a composer who lived through—lived against, one might say—a time when "optimism" was one of the official requirements. It would be an appalling irony if his music were now to be celebrated for precisely the attribute it refused to supply on demand in Brezhnev's Moscow.

The only sure hope in this music—one notes this more bleakly than gaily—is the hope it brings to the record business. With more than forty compact disks devoted exclusively to his works, Mr. Schnittke must be the living composer most frequently recorded (Philip Glass would be the nearest contender for that title); the figure also testifies to his productivity. Within the last decade, for instance, he's written five symphonies, five concertos, three full-length operas, and numerous smaller works. But though one might think that this creative abundance would itself express hope, it doesn't quite work that way, largely because we can't tell whether we're dealing with a Haydn, fluently composing to order, or a Hugo Wolf, tearing through pages with his demons behind him. The clues can all be read both ways, and it's the thorough ambivalence of this music, down into its marrow, that's responsible for its disturbing unease—and that efficiently eliminates all hope of hope.

This ambivalence is a particularly Russian quality—Stalin's great gift to musical history. It isn't the pearly ambivalence of a Boulez or a Berio, where the meaning is in the glistening of many meanings; it's an ashen ambivalence of enforced statement (joy, progress, affirmation, as it had to be for Stalin's composers) and dissident subtext (i.e., Don't you believe it)—an ambivalence that in the case of Shostakovich didn't need spelling out in alleged memoirs. It didn't need spelling out because the voice in Shostakovich's music is clear, and we feel we can tell what tone it has.



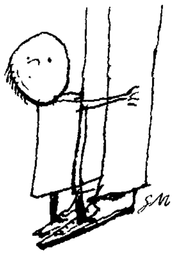
But the great point about Mr. Schnittke's music is that it refuses us this confidence. Mr. Schnittke has no voice, because he has no style. His name is legion. He can write radiant choral harmony in the Russian Orthodox tradition, as in his a-cappella Concerto, or dark, brooding pieces, like his Viola Concerto, or gags and parodies, or Baroque pastiches, as in his several concerti grossi, or pseudo Mahler, as in his Fifth Symphony. He can pile all these things up and put a jazz band on top, as he did in his First Symphony. He can clear them away and leave just the wandering melody of a waltz, as he does at the end of the new symphony for the Philharmonic, which Mr. Masur was conducting. What he never tells us is what they mean. One can't just accept them at face value: a waltz in the nineteen-nineties can't be simply a waltz, and the way Mr. Schnittke presents his waltz, as a solo line intoned in succession by three deep-bass voices—tuba, contrabassoon, and double bass—displaces any possibility of naïve acceptance. We listen expectantly for the double meaning: this is how the music imposes its demand for interpretation. But what we're given is a sequence of blank checks on which we can write what value we will, in the knowledge that afterward we're bound to feel that we've failed some test, or been cheated (though only if we think we have a right to certainties the music can't offer and doesn't pretend to offer).

It may help a little to have some awareness of the Soviet background—to know, for instance, that the early-music revival of the sixties and seventies had in Russia the special meaning of dissent, because it allowed musicians to steer away from officially sanctioned symphonic practice, and to do so unimpeachably. Hard to call Vivaldi to account before the Union of Soviet Composers. The harpsichord thus became a symbol of challenge, and dissident composers—like the energetic Andrei Volkonsky (what became of him?)—found in the unlikely medium of Baroque continuo playing a way of voicing protest. Unapprised of this history, one might easily read Mr. Schnittke's frequent recourses to the harpsichord and to eighteenth-century style as merely rococo prettifications or images of lost content.

But they may well be those things, too. Before the new symphony, the Philharmonic played the composer's "(K)ein Sommernachtstraum" (a deeply Schnittke-esque title, in defining what the piece is not; apparently, he had thought of calling his First Symphony "Kein Symphonie"), which begins as a Mozartian-minuet conversation between violin with piano and flute with harpsichord, and which progressively occludes and refracts the innocent little air until all we hear is a haze or a rude circus march. Is the piece, despite its title, a dream, like Ives's "Putnam's Camp"? Is it a joke? Is it a refusal of Soviet conformity? Is it—if we bear in mind that it was commissioned by the Salzburg Festival—a satire on the veneration of St. Wolfgang Amadeus? This performance, which Mr. Masur teasingly let steal upon us directly after three minuets with bona-fide Köchel numbers, quite properly left us with questions.

"(K)ein Sommernachtstraum" was written in 1985, which is an awfully long way back both in Russian history and in Mr. Schnittke's catalogue. In his more recent music he appears to have moved away from fake Mozartiana and from the bustling pseudo Brandenburgery of his first concerti grossi: the fifth in this series, which had its première at Carnegie Hall three years ago, is a fiendish, glacial violin concerto, composed for Gidon Kremer and recorded by him (on DG 437 091-2). This more recent music is shocked and numb. It's still riddled with references, but they've retreated, become sketchy and doubtful. For example, the Seventh Symphony starts out with an unaccompanied violin solo, whose opening rise echoes, though with severe attenuation, the same point in the Seventh Symphony of Bruckner. But the moment passes, and it's hard to know whether it was a planted allusion or a coincidence—a coincidence of the kind that happened in "(K)ein Sommernachtstraum" when, in concocting what he thought was imitation Mozart, Mr. Schnittke came up with something like the melody of one of the minuets that Mr. Masur selected for this program, K.104 No. 3.

Saying that we can't be sure what's deliberate in this music is equivalent to saying that we don't know what it means—not for reasons of difficulty or obfuscation but because the ground has slipped from under our feet. It has slipped from under the composer's, too. In a recent interview, he made a striking remark about his Sixth Symphony, saying, "It's not clear if we've really heard it." The reason for this would not be that the composer hasn't done his job properly, or that so far audiences have been uncomprehending; the reason would be that the ability of all of us—composer and audience—to make contact with the music is impaired. Mr. Schnittke is not in the business of writing us messages: the doubts and doublenesses in his music would make such presumption impossible. He's as distanced from his music as the rest of us, perhaps as puzzled by it. It's just that he has the responsibility of trapping these gray clouds, these ashes, for us to inspect and ponder.



In an output not notable for good cheer, the Sixth Symphony—given its New York première by Mstislav Rostropovich and the National Symphony in Carnegie Hall a few days before the Seventh—is particularly desolate. It has the usual four movements, of classical dimensions, but the fabric is shot to pieces; long stretches of the opening allegro are occupied by just a few brass instruments, or by the low strings, and much of the material is abrupt—idea, silence, idea. Often the fragments suggest religious music—chorale or chant—and one is reminded that Mr. Schnittke's previous even-numbered symphonies were both muffled rituals: No. 2 a hidden Mass, and No. 4 an interweaving of Catholic, Orthodox, and Jewish sacred melodies. But the wreckage of a church is pretty much like the wreckage of a liquor store, and what shouts loudest in this movement is the plain fact of brokenness. We may not have "really heard it," but what we did hear was frightening enough. The many who piled out after the initial movement may have been the astutest listeners.

The Seventh Symphony—in three movements, playing for under twenty-five minutes—is less uncomfortable, but not by much. Again, a lot of the music thinly spans great vacancies: in the opening violin solo, in the gaunt scoring and spasmodic gesturing in most of what follows, and in the final waltz, where eighty-odd people are sitting on the platform for minutes with nothing to do. Mr. Schnittke is a great composer for silent musicians and, conversely, of invisible music. At the start of "(K)ein Sommernachtstraum," the difficulty of seeing who's playing heightens one's awareness that so many are not, and in the Fifth Concerto Grosso there's a prominent part for offstage piano. The Seventh Symphony leaves some instruments cold except for the tiniest flicker of life: a scale and a few briefer touches from the eternal harpsichord; just a chord each from harp and piano. (Perhaps one day there'll be a Schnittke symphony in which all the music comes from unseen players while an orchestra onstage helplessly waits.)

The third movement is by far the biggest, and includes episodes of extreme weirdness—especially some highly angular melodies from oboe and clarinets, brilliantly played by the Philharmonic soloists (and Eugene Levinson on bass at the end was outstanding: perfectly in control, whistling in the dark). The first movement is almost exclusively for strings, the second almost exclusively for winds, brass, and percussion, calling out German place-names in musical code. This geographical interlude was maybe a nod to Mr. Masur (Mr. Schnittke's Third Symphony, also written for him, includes similar ciphers for German composers), maybe an acknowledgment of the composer's ancestry and current abode. He must, too, have appreciated the irony that the German pitch names extractable from "Deutschland" come perilously close to the DSCH motif with which Shostakovich inscribed himself in his music: though Mr. Schnittke lives in Hamburg, he remains a Russian composer.

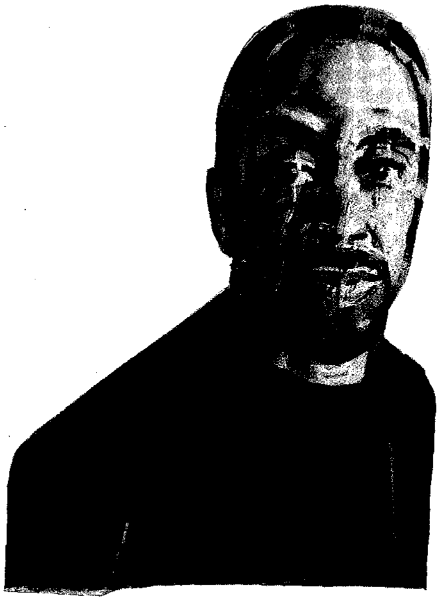
The altogether excellent performance of the new symphony did credit to the Philharmonic and to Mr. Masur. They were lucky, though, that there were others around to pick up the Schnittke theme: not only the National Symphony at Carnegie Hall but also Yale Music Spectrum, with two keyboard works at Merkin Hall, and Leon Botstein and the American Symphony Orchestra, with the "Faust" cantata at Avery Fisher Hall. Without these additional events, the Philharmonic's Composer Week would have been a rather meagre affair: half an hour of music, played three times. If such weeks are to happen regularly, as they should, let them grow. ♦

BAD INFLUENCE

BY HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR.

Makes Me Wanna Holler
by Nathan McCall
(Random House; $23)

IN the course of a spectacularly uneven career, Richard Wright, the first black writer to earn a living by his pen, created two indelible characters. The first was Bigger Thomas, the protagonist of "Native Son" (1940). Young, black, and poor—and victimized by a series of events beyond his control or comprehension—Bigger ends up killing both a white heiress and his own girlfriend before being captured and sentenced to death. His rapid descent, detailed by Wright with unapologetic naturalism, reveals the hopelessness of a life where free will is merely an illusion, where any glimmering of real freedom is blotted out by the cruel collusion of racism and capitalism. Bigger was an archetypal vessel of what cultural commentators like to call "the rage of the black male."

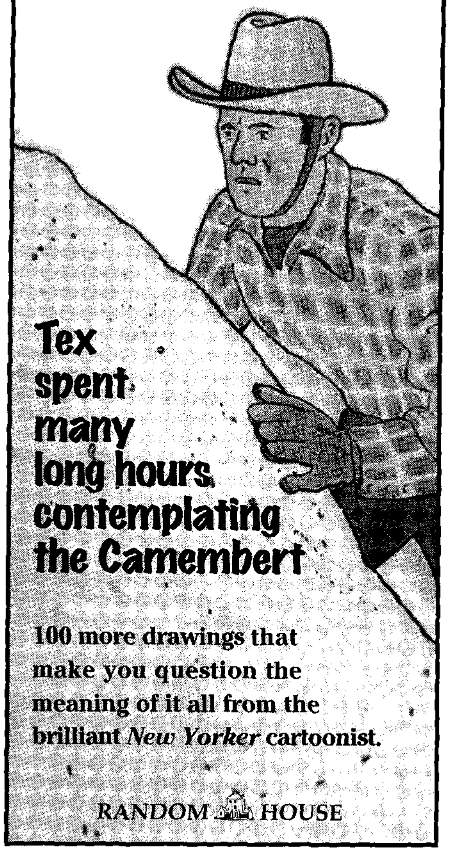


McCall's memoir is a stirring tale of transformation: Bigger Thomas becoming Richard Wright.

The second of Richard Wright's enduring creations was Richard Wright. Most memorably set forth in the pages of his memoir, "Black Boy" (1945), the character of Richard Wright is another study in black rage, as a Southern child discovers the oppressions of family, race, and region. But where the novel follows a downward spiral, the memoir is in some measure a narrative of transcendence. At least its narrator survived to write the tale.

There is larger significance in the fact that so often the first book published by a black American writer (though this was not true in Wright's case) has been autobiography; it's as if the tradition of the slave narrative had never been fully dislodged by post-emancipation history. My point is not about content so much as classification: many first novels are autobiographical, but they are not submitted for our consideration *as* autobiography. Say you grew up pale and Presbyterian in Poughkeepsie, attended Haverford College, experienced your first grand passion, and—well, you know the drill. Such is the stuff of the First Novel: the coming-of-age of a sensitive, misunderstood young man or woman who happens to bear an uncanny resemblance to the author. But it is the birthright of the black writer that his experiences, however personal, are also automatically historical. In the same way that Shelley saw all poems as fragments of one vast ur-poem, we see the black memoirist's tale as part of a larger, subsuming saga—an entry in the vast, multivolume project of Narrating the Negro.

Like most birthrights, this one is both a blessing and a burden. For one thing, it means that your tale is never completely your own—that the particularity of your tale is subordinated to an overarching narrative. If the goal of autobiography is the assertion of individuality, as has conventionally been understood, the typical black memoir is assigned the contrary task: that of being representative. (One of W. E. B. Du Bois's memoirs bears the portentous subtitle "An Essay Toward an Autobiography of a Race Concept.") What's exceptional is not the tale you have to tell but the fact that you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survived to tell it. As Whitman said, "I am the man, I suffer'd, I was there."

Two of the best-known works in the genre, Claude Brown's 1965 "Manchild in the Promised Land" and Eldridge Cleaver's 1968 "Soul on Ice," self-consciously drew upon Wright in conjuring up the allure of the so-called Bad Nigger and the disastrous effects of ghetto life on the black male consciousness. At times, these books read like real-life versions of Bigger Thomas's story. Yet it's easy to forget that the social landscape they recorded was a veritable church picnic compared with the bullet-pocked desolation of the inner city now.

Today, advocacy groups declare the black man "an endangered species," and this is supported by reams of numbing statistics. But crisis requires narrative, not simply numbers: sooner or later, every generation must find its voice. It may be that ours belongs to Nathan McCall, whose memoir is, finally, a stirring tale of transformation: Bigger Thomas becoming Richard Wright. (When I was shown the manuscript of this book last year, I was moved to offer a comment on its place in the canon of African-American literature for the book jacket.) McCall, a Washington *Post* reporter who, as a young man, served prison time for armed robbery, writes affectingly about his first encounter with his fictional alter ego, which comes at the center of his book, amid a harrowing description of prison life. While he is working as the inmate librarian, he picks up a copy of "Native Son" and finds himself unable to put it down:

> I identified strongly with Bigger and the book's narrative. He was twenty, the same age as me. He felt the things I felt, and, like me, he wound up in prison. The book's portrait of Bigger captured all those conflicting feelings—restless anger, hopelessness, a tough façade among blacks and a deep-seated fear of whites—that I'd sensed in myself but was unable to express. Often, during my teenage years, I'd felt like Bigger—headed down a road toward a destruction I couldn't ward off, beaten by forces so large and amorphous that I had no idea how to fight back. I was surprised that somebody had written a book that so closely reflected my experiences and feelings.

When McCall finished reading "Native Son," he "broke down and sobbed like a baby." More to the point, his encounter with Wright led him to a "fascination with the power of words." He writes, "It blew my mind to think that somebody could take words that described exactly how I felt and put them together in a story like that."

This is a skill that McCall himself came to master. He is a mesmerizing storyteller, whose prose is richly inflected with the vernacular of his time and place. In fact, his colloquial style is so unshowy and unforced that his mastery is easy to overlook. There are no traces here of the anxious autodidact—no labored sentences, no straining for deep thoughts. He doesn't use "urinous" when "pissy" is the right word. He's not just a man with a story to tell; he's a writer.

Among Wright's papers are his notes for "Native Son," including a sheet bearing the typed heading "Poetic Motifs To Be Woven Into Final Scene." With all due respect, I've always wondered if Wright's need to be "literary" wasn't itself a literary failure; a failure, at least, of nerve. Those "poetic motifs"—hidden like Easter eggs, more for the enjoyment of foraging literary critics than for the enlightenment of readers—seem too transparent a bribe. Is it so wrong to want our naturalism au naturel?

In this respect, McCall's discipline as a newspaperman has served him well. And his sense of pacing is nearly cinematic; scenes flash by as if projected on a screen. He can introduce new characters in a sentence or two and make them come alive. But most impressive are McCall's unflagging powers of retrieval and reconstruction: he never succumbs to the temptation to endow his earlier self with a consciousness beyond his years. The world view of the seventeen-year-old Nathan comes to us unretouched and unvarnished, or so it seems. And again, when he describes how, a few years later, he shot a friend who had insulted his girlfriend, he spares us the high-flown anguish, instead telling us, with disarming directness, "I felt like God. I felt so good and powerful that I wanted to do it again. I felt like I could pull that trigger, and keep on pulling it until I emptied the gun."

IS Nate McCall another Bigger Thomas? In some respects, I'd venture that the young McCall was closer to Bigger Thomas than Richard Wright was. The first part of "Makes Me Wanna Holler" gives us a portrait of the artist as serial rapist, stickup artist, drug dealer, gunman, brawler, and burglar. It's no surprise that the earth moved for McCall when he read "Native Son." And black rage is in plentiful supply in his memoir. "After we reached the ninth grade . . . we fucked up white boys more than we went to class," McCall writes. He recalls one memorable afternoon:

> . . . we double-banked a guy standing at his locker in the area where the wood-shop classes were held. We walked as if we were going to pass him, then Lep hauled off and punched him in the face. Then I popped him in the mouth. He fell back and slammed his head into the lockers. Before I could hit him again, somebody else hit him with a barrage of punches that sent him crashing to the floor. We kicked him in the face and stomped him until blood squirted everywhere. After we finished, we ran out a side door and went home.
>
> I saw that white boy in school about a week later. Walking down the hall, Lep nudged me and pointed him out. He had his arm in a sling and bandages taped to the bridge of his nose. I snickered and told Lep, "We fucked him up *good*."

Bigger Thomas, by his maker's stipulation, was the product of his environment: the slum, in all its desolation. Bigger competes for floor space with rats in a tenement on Chicago's South Side. But McCall was raised in a world that was working class by mainstream standards and middle class by black standards—a world which bore less resemblance to Richard Wright's soul-destroying South Side than to Gloria Naylor's Linden Hills. His family moved to Cavalier Manor, a black suburb of Portsmouth, Virginia, when he was nine:

> The streets had names such as Belafonte Drive, Basie Crescent, Eckstine Drive, and Horne Avenue. To add to the sense of optimism that the neighborhood was supposed to reflect, they even named one street Freedom Avenue. . . . Our eyes and mouths flew wide open. We saw impressive homes with freshly sprouted lawns, broad sidewalks, and newly paved streets. On each side of the street that led to our section of the community were two sets of stately white brick pillars with black cast-iron bars flowing regally through their tops.

Driveways, garages, lawns: this was the sort of place where most black folks could only dream of living. Nor, as he points out, do the clichés about broken families apply to him. His parents were supportive of him and strict with him; his stepfather held two jobs and saved enough to insure that one of the family's two cars was always a late-model Cadillac. Indeed, the stepfather was everything John Calvin envisioned: "My old man had a serious thing about work. My brothers and I would wake up on a Saturday morning and he'd have a *long* list of things for us to do: rake the yard, cut the grass, wash the car, clean the gutters, sweep the walk. . . ." As a kid, McCall was constantly assured that "if you work hard, you can get anything you want in life."

Nevertheless, he spent his adolescence "training" girls (gang-raping them, that is), stomping on street kids, and ripping off stores. And still a bright future awaited him: he was named homecoming king of his high school, and was admitted to Howard University. At his high-school graduation, other black kids in his class walked off with prizes and scholarships—those students traipsing through the hallways with armloads of books, whom McCall had scorned as "no name lame" Negroes. But they clearly represent for him the road not taken. McCall was ultimately bound for success as a journalist, but not before his criminal pursuits resulted in his serving almost three years of a twelve-year prison sentence for armed robbery.

McCALL'S account of prison life is unsparing, but it seems to be a rare example of how a stint in a correctional facility actually corrected. Being behind bars "forced me to go deep, real deep, within and tap a well I didn't even know I had," McCall writes. "Through that painful trip, I'd found meaning. No longer was life a thing of bewilderment. . . . I knew that there was purpose and design in creation and that my life was somehow part of that grand scheme."

"Purpose and design," of course, are what any memoirist must discover within or impose upon his material. "Post hoc, ergo propter hoc" may be a logical fallacy, but it is the very lifeblood of narrative. And so an age-old problem arises. If telling stories is a way of assigning a chain of causation to acts and events—thus revealing their "purpose and design"—how does a writer leave room for his character's free choice? "Native Son" veers from rigidly behaviorist to wildly existentialist models of human action: the Communist lawyer, Mr. Max, regards Bigger not as a man but as a type, a walking symptom of an American disease, while Bigger himself, even as he awaits execution, insists with twisted Cartesian certainty, "What I killed for, I *am!*" Nor, in subsequent works, did Wright succeed in resolving his warring intuitions on the subject. McCall knows better than to try.

This tension runs through public-policy discourse as well: Is black America ailing as a result of behavioral or structural causes? (Did *you* screw up, or did the system screw you?) When McCall theorizes about the problems of black America, he makes much of "the system." When he thinks about his own errancy, however, his mind runs on a different track. As a squad car takes him to the police station—he has just knocked over a hamburger joint—he's not thinking Mr. Max-like thoughts about environmental determinism. He's thinking that he should have listened to his mother. And he's thinking back to his third-grade spelling bee:

> I was an honor student then and felt so full of promise. I had made it to the competition finals but was eliminated after misspelling a word; I think it was "bicycle." *If I could go back to that night on that school stage,* I thought, *I would spell that word right and straighten out all the other things in life that had since gone wrong.*

McCall's reverie of self-recrimination suggests that, just as there are no atheists in the foxhole, there are no behaviorists in the holding cell. In other words, a bad environment might make someone else out there bad, but when it comes to me that explanation never seems quite convincing. Only at the price of relinquishing my own sense of humanity can I believe that I had no hand in my own fate.

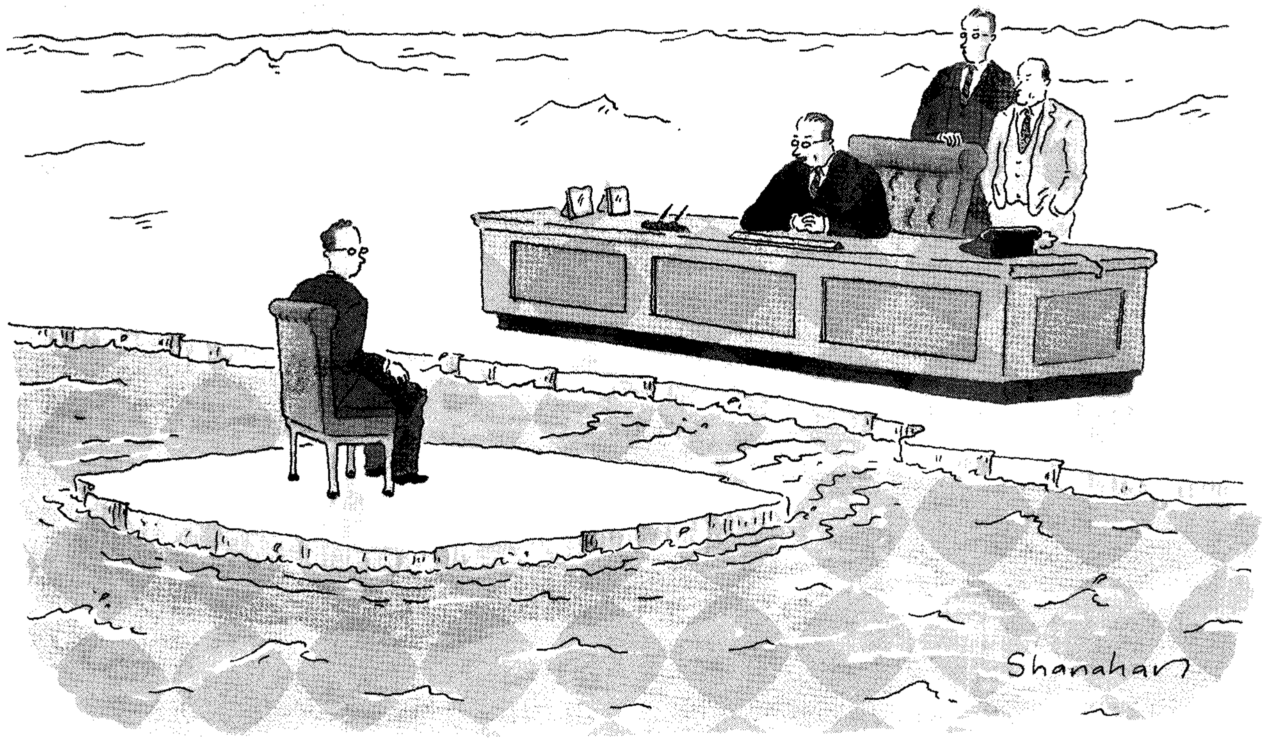
And while the character Nathan McCall may display an occasional weakness for early-seventies-style racial Manichaeanism, the writer Nathan McCall is capable of revealing far more complexity and nuance. The old dialectic between fate and will, between social structure and individual agency—a dialectic that has been the shared preoccupation of naturalist fiction and sociological analysis—is rendered in this memoir as a tug-of-war between the two McCalls. Even the protagonist of "Native Son" outwitted his creator's announced desire to present a marionette of external social forces as he took on a dark life force of his own: Bigger Thomas as Coppélia. Somewhere, out there, the Black Boy and the Native Son are still having it out.

AFTER his release from prison, McCall comes to realize both that the deck is stacked against him and that it is up to him to play the cards he has been dealt. He studies journalism at Norfolk State College; joins, then leaves, the American Muslim Mission; and, on graduation, takes a position at the *Vi ginian Pilot-Ledger Star*, his home-town newspaper. A writer is born:

> The first time I wrote a story as a full-fledged reporter, I stared at my byline a long time. There it was, just below the headline: Nathan McCall. It felt good seeing my name in the newspaper associated with something other than crime. It gave me a rush seeing that name on a document that was read by thousands of people. Sometimes, if I had a front-page story in the paper, I'd stop by newsstands on the street just to stare at my byline. I'd wonder how many people in the region would see that name.

The book's final section traces McCall's journalistic career, which leads him to the Atlanta *Journal-Constitution* and, finally, to the Washington *Post;* we see his attempts to deal with both the racism he perceives among his white colleagues and the difficulties attendant on his own upward mobility, the "crazy high-wire act" of living in "three conflicting worlds—among whites, working-class blacks, and bourgeois Negroes." There's an inevitable slackening of energy—and, perhaps, of perspective—in the book's final stretch, as McCall makes his ascent from b-boy to buppie. Still, the honesty of his self-examination remains unrelenting and often startling. A chapter entitled "Hell," for example, isn't about coping with racism but about his marriage to Debbie, the woman he married so their son and daughter would have a legal father. McCall is now a successful journalist at a distinguished newspaper, and yet he can still experience a rage so profound that it threatens to demolish the life he has made for himself. In the midst of an unpleasant divorce, McCall finds himsel watching Debbie speak and yet unabl to hear her, so loud is his fury:

> That familiar tightness formed in m chest, that fight-or-flight feeling that use to come over me in the old days on th streets. I felt it rising, like vomit just befor it convulses you and forces its way out o your mouth. I felt myself about to leap u and punch her in the face. I felt it comin over me, and I got scared. I knew that if



"We're very sorry, Templeton."

• •

got up from that couch and took one swing—*one swing*—it would get *good* to me and I wouldn't stop. I wouldn't stop until I was completely exhausted or until my ex-wife was stone cold dead. As I sat there, mute, the voices of divorce veterans kept whispering, competing for control: *Knock that bitch's front teeth out. No, take the high road.*

Instead of taking a swing, McCall gets counselling, and comes to understand that "none of my domestic problems related directly to my race—divorce is a universal hell." When Debbie states before the divorce judge that she is afraid of her husband—a man who had, after all, been jailed for a violent crime—McCall is outraged. Yet he tells us that if it hadn't been for the calming words of a counsellor he probably would have killed her. McCall could easily have ended up like his former running partners, whom he reflects on toward the end of his book, as he takes a cruise through his old neighborhood:

> There was Steve and his brother, who both committed suicide, and Charlene, whose husband murdered her. Charlene had taught me how to hand-dance. And there was Jack, who blew his old man away with a shotgun blast. Ronald Bailey and Gibbs had gotten killed. The list of those dead was far too long for guys our age. Worse still was the list of those brothers who were drug zombies. They were breathing, but were more dead than alive. Teeth missing from their mouths. Skin pallid and ashen. Eyes vacant, and hearts cold as ice in winter.

What went wrong? That plaintive question fairly bleats through the pages. The fact that McCall did not grow up surrounded by the stereotypical black urban mayhem is what makes his history of violence—mostly directed against other black men and women—so profoundly depressing. As he recognizes, no social program, no Marshall Plan for the cities, would have saved a Nathan McCall, since he already had all the things whose lack is said to cause black suffering—the caring, stable two-parent family, the role models, the basic financial stability.

After Claude Brown's "Manchild in the Promised Land" was published, one reviewer wrote that his "miraculous autobiography suffers from a canker: the miracle of his salvation is presented brilliantly, but the causes for it remain vague." I suspect some will upbraid McCall for the opposite omission. He has a ready explanation for why he got back on track when most of his fellow-inmates returned to their old ways: he had that stable and supportive family; he was aware that "even when I chose the gutter, I'd always had a frame of reference for a better life." But why did he choose the gutter in the first place?

I READ "Makes Me Wanna Holler" with a sense of both recognition and consternation. McCall and I are only a few years apart in age, so I share his cultural references; my old man, like his, was an unskilled worker who held two jobs. The warm-bath intimacy of the all-black world that McCall grew up in is familiar to me. But as for how a Bigger Thomas emerged from all this, McCall ultimately doesn't have a clue, and neither do I.

This isn't necessarily a failing. Instead, I think, McCall's refusal to reach for easy solutions is a sign of the fierce honesty that infuses the entire book; he's willing to address the question without pretending to have an answer to it. He can readily supply the proximate cause: bad influences of a subculture in which recreational gang rape was a fun alternative to stickball, and to shoot somebody for dissing you was the quickest way to establish your credibility as a real man. But what of those who emerged unscathed, those "no name lame" Negroes from school? McCall had been among their number before he succumbed to the romance of the street, and two of his brothers grew up to be decent, hardworking men without a detour.

One explanation that McCall flirts with amplifies something Mr. Max told Bigger Thomas: "You're trying to believe in yourself. And every time you try to find a way to live, your own mind stands in the way. You know why that is? It's because others have said you were bad and they made you live in bad conditions." When McCall encountered this passage, he "wept uncontrollably." Black people, he comes to believe, suffer poor self-esteem, even self-hatred, as the result of internalized oppression; these demons hound them even when those "bad conditions" are absent. And the tinselly notion of self-esteem is repeatedly invoked throughout the book. (At one point, he posits poor self-esteem as the real source of Southern white racism as well.)

The only trouble with this notion is that it explains too much. The world is full of well-behaved men and women who spend their sessions at the therapist discussing their lack of self-esteem; a self-esteem problem is just about the only difficulty that Bigger Thomas and the white heiress he kills would have had in common. Is bloodshed in Bed-Stuy to be assigned the same root cause as bulimia in Brookline? "All of America needs to be on the couch," McCall has said. But we know that in the age of Prozac the couch has an increasingly tenuous role; and while the temptation to reduce politics to psychology is not a new one, it may be more hazardous than ever. (I don't think I exaggerate: a recent article in *Newsweek* tells us that studies have connected violence to low serotonin levels in the brain, leading some clinicians to speculate about the usefulness of serotonin-boosters like Prozac in addressing the problem.)

McCall's final words on the subject of where he and his friends went wrong are curiously tentative. He sees that "the problems among us are more complex than something we can throw jobs, social programs, or more policemen at," and suggests that the trouble may have something to do with the way we perceive our life chances. Although "the reality may well have been that possibilities for us were abundant," he writes, "we perceived our choices as being somewhat limited." Again, there's something to this, but it doesn't quite measure up to the explanatory task at hand: it doesn't make comprehensible the bullets, the rapes, the robberies, and the sheer terrorism that McCall and his friends wreaked upon their community.

In his classic essay "How Bigger Was Born," Richard Wright wrestled with the same question. Emphasizing the point that Bigger is a type rather than an individual, he writes, "I'd better indicate more precisely the nature of the environment that produced these men, or the reader will be left with the impression that they were essentially and organically bad." He goes on to identify two factors that were always "psychologically dominant": first, Bigger had become "estranged from the religion and the folk culture of his race"; and, second, he was "trying to react to and answer the call of the dominant civilization whose glitter came to him through the newspapers, magazines, radios, movies, and the mere imposing sight and sound of daily American life." No doubt these are half-truths—Wright had no real answers, either—but half-truths in such matters may be the best we can hope for. Perhaps McCall cannot tell us why he made the choices he did, but at least he can bear witness to the results: I am the man, I suffer'd, I was there.

The Negro, Wright famously averred, was "America's metaphor." But he had more specific ambitions for his own creation; Bigger Thomas, he believed, would prove "a symbolic figure of American life, a figure who would hold within him the prophecy of our future." "Makes Me Wanna Holler" is about the unfolding of that dire prophecy, no more and no less. Fifty years later, Bigger lives on. ◆

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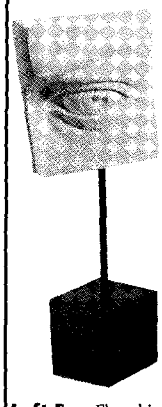

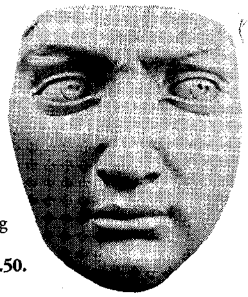

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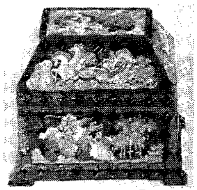

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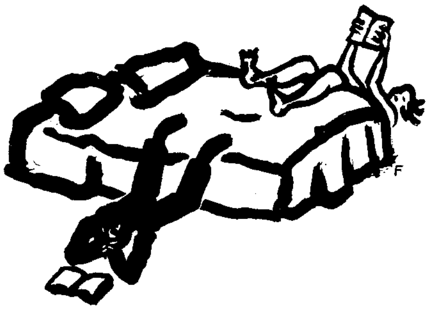

BOOKS BRIEFLY NOTED

BIOGRAPHY

Harriet Beecher Stowe
by Joan D. Hedrick
(Oxford; $35)

THE great achievement of this book is to make the commonplace aspects of Stowe's life as fascinating as the tumult surrounding the publication of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," in 1852. Hedrick describes how Stowe moved from the literary pursuits of the bourgeois parlor—letter-writing and literary clubs—to become what Susan B. Anthony called the Queen Bee of women's literature. Of course, much that was commonplace for nineteenth-century women was also dramatic. Stowe was frequently in poor health from her numerous pregnancies (she bore seven children), and in seeking health she experimented with a panoply of nineteenth-century fads, including hydropathy, mesmerism, and Dr. Taylor's Swedish Movement Cure. Her scholar husband, Calvin Stowe, was hypochondriacal, unhappy, and always short of money. When her early literary efforts proved popular, Stowe embarked on a writing career to bolster the family finances. She had long opposed slavery, and her loss of a favorite child, in 1849, seems to have heightened her awareness of the ways slavery shattered black families; the power of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" came from her ability to depict in human terms the family suffering caused by slavery. The book's phenomenal success made Stowe wealthy, and she was canny about preserving and profiting from her celebrity. Much of her later work paid homage to the New England of her youth, and male critics took to denouncing its sentimentality. Hedrick is particularly adept at elucidating the ways a male literary establishment systematically downgraded women's literature while canonizing the works of male authors, like Hawthorne. While she stakes no exaggerated claims for Stowe's literary worth, she makes it clear that Stowe's reputation was affected by more than the merit of her writings.

Georges Perec: A Life in Words
by David Bellos
(Godine; $45)

THIS engaging biography of the French writer seems surprisingly hefty (seven hundred pages), considering that its subject died (of lung cancer; he was a heavy smoker) a few days before his forty-sixth birthday. But the biographer is the heroic and ingenious translator into English of Perec's great novel "Life A User's Manual," and the same virtues that led him to solve the formidable challenges involved in that project enable him to reconstruct Perec's creative life with sympathetic thoroughness. His examination of the personal is always focussed on its literary outcome. As in a Perec novel, stories are told and then undone. One of the most interesting—and impressively researched—sections deals with the discrepancies between the facts of Perec's Holocaust-orphaned childhood and the memories he recorded in "W." There are other surprises: during his most productive years, Perec held down a full-time job as an archivist-bibliographer in a scientific-research lab, and for a while he also devised crosswords for a weekly magazine. And it is lovely to know that one of the most technically innovative writers of the twentieth century never owned a television or learned to drive a car.

Alfred Nobel
by Kenne Fant; translated from the
Swedish by Marianne Ruuth
(Arcade; $24.95)

NOBEL was born in 1833 and died in 1896, and, like the nineteenth century, he started off as a Romantic, even writing Shelleyan verse (in English). But his father turned him toward science, and he became an inventor (most famously of dynamite), an industrialist, a multinational capitalist, and, finally, a philanthropist. In a family of industrialists—there were five brothers—Alfred had the best head for business: his father went bankrupt twice, and his brothers were often overextended. Fant tells us that Nobel kept a copy of every letter he wrote, and the mass of documentation is both useful and confusing. We know that he worked very hard, but his complaints about the pressures of business seem excessive. And he said so many different things about war and peace that it's not easy to know exactly what he thought. Fant, who is always cautious—sometimes too cautious—about interpretation, doesn't really help. Nobel's father invented the first workable undersea mine, but he had had to sell it to Russia, and in his old age he became obsessed with the defense of his native Sweden; Alfred, toward the end of *his* life, bought and reorganized Bofors to provide Sweden with its own defense industry. So perhaps he embodies another of the perplexities that his century bequeathed to ours: he was a nineteenth-century liberal and a nineteenth-century nationalist.

James Beard
by Robert Clark
(HarperCollins; $27.50)

THIS exceptional life presents an appealing character, a pioneer of modern American cookery, and offers an entertainingly shrewd history of American eating habits in the twentieth century, which turn out to be a hash of ambivalences: fine dining versus dieting, fear of snobbery at war with social competitiveness. Beard, who was born in Portland, Oregon, in 1903, grew up when most American food was fresh and seasonal, because it was produced locally. By the time he died, in 1985, most American food was homogenized, because it was nationalized, moving from agribusiness to industrial processor to supermarket. Clark is candid about the "habitual viciousness" of the infighting among high-profile food experts; about Beard's homosexuality and the strain it imposed in a closeted era; and in his assessments of Beard's colleagues and of Beard's work. Although Beard championed the food of his childhood, he earned much of his income by lending his authority to large food corporations, national and international. The author leaves no doubt that Beard did begin to make middle-class Americans aware of what they were eating. Alas, he also exemplifies the perils of eating to excess: the last thirty years of his life were tormented by illnesses associated with obesity. ♦

SHOUTS AND MURMURS

EAT AT COSMO'S

BY MARK LEYNER

I WAS recently conference-called by a threesome of Chicago entrepreneurs who wanted to know if I'd be interested in writing scripts for educational videos that involved an oblique commercial component for corporate sponsors. Now, I've been out of the advertising business for some six years. But I've never quite got it out of my system—the charged office milieu that requires agile, lightning-quick shifts from ruthless predation to abject, butt-slobbering sycophancy. I meet with these guys, and right off the bat I can see that they're mice and not men, and that this project is going absolutely nowhere. And I'm evincing skepticism all over the place: sighing, drumming my fingers, working my cuticles with an orange stick, blowing bubbles in my coffee . . .

"What's wrong?" says one, finally. "You don't look too enthusiastic."

"The bottom line here is getting a plug for your sponsors, right? Well, this whole vehicle is too subtle, too namby-pamby. How are these kids going to remember the products when you're being so goddam diffident?"

"First of all, Mark, the bottom line here is education."

"They're holding high-school classes at the Mall of America in Minneapolis, for Christ's sake. School at the mall! What are you guys worried about?"

"We have to be very careful about mixing education and commercialism."

"Crap. Commercialism is all that a lot of kids have to hang on to anymore. Look, I've got an idea for you guys that's not only a pedagogical godsend but will also give your sponsors some high-profile name recognition. You know about product placement in movies? Why not do it in literature textbooks?"

"You mean like put ad inserts in a book of Shakespeare plays?"

"Not ads. I'm talking about interpolating product names into the text itself, so that kids come across a sponsor's product as if it were in the original work."

They grimace at me dyspeptically. "*Aren't children going to take umbrage* at being issued adulterated textbooks?"

"You think they'll even know? There's the present and then there's this dumpster of undifferentiated synchronic trivia called 'history.' Ask a kid which happened first, the Peloponnesian Wars or the Korean War—no clue, I assure you. Let me show you what I'm talking about." I reach into my briefcase. "Willa Cather. 'My Ántonia.' Let's just open her up here. O.K. They're talking about some guy, Mr. Shimerda: 'His face had a look of weariness and pleasure, like that of sick people when they feel relief from pain. Grandmother insisted on his drinking a glass of Virginia apple-brandy after his long walk in the cold . . .' "

I make several flourishes with my blue pen, and presto: " 'His face had a look of weariness and pleasure, like that of sick people when they feel relief from pain. Grandmother insisted on his drinking *a 40-oz. bottle of St. Ides malt liquor* after his long walk in the cold . . .'

"It's that easy, gentlemen. Seamless product insertions percolating into the minds of our young scholars. And it works with any genre. You guys familiar with the Japanese haiku poet Bashō? Well, this is a little tricky, because you gotta maintain the right syllable count. O.K., listen to this: 'Seven sights were veiled/In mist—then I heard/Mii Temple's bell.' How about something like 'Seven sights were veiled / In mist—then I heard / the *Taco Bell*.' Not bad, huh? And it scans!"

After considerable paper shuffling, the trio demurs in a gutless arpeggio. "Mark, this isn't really the direction we had in mind—it's a little too aggressive."

"Might spook the sponsors."

"Spook the sponsors?" I say, packing up my things. "Listen, when you boys grow up and decide that you want to do some real advertising, give me a call."

ON the way home, I stop at Cosmo's Bakery in Hoboken for a cup of coffee. Cosmo has just taken a tray of jelly doughnuts from the oven.

"Mark, how ya doin'?"

"Not bad, Cosmo."

"What are you workin' on?"

"I'm writing this 'Shouts and Murmurs' piece for *The New Yorker* about companies inserting their products' names in textbooks for school kids."

"The companies have to pay, right? It's like they do in movies."

"Exactly, Coz."

"Hey, what would it cost me to get my bakery mentioned in the piece?"

"In the 'Shouts and Murmurs' piece? Jeez, I don't know. Let me think. Maybe five hundred dollars for a mention."

He pulls a thick money roll out of his pocket and peels off five crisp C-notes, each emblazoned with a big flour thumbprint.

I take the cash. "Consider it done."

"How much to mention I got zeppoles every Saturday?"

"Jeez, Coz, c'mon. Did I come in here selling space?"

He peels off another five Franklins

I take the money. "Done," I say.

"Mark, don't just stick it in real obvious. Make it part of the flow, you know what I'm sayin'?"

"Seamless, Cosmo, seamless. I'm a professional."

I snatch a jelly doughnut from th tray and exit through a jingling doo into frigid air and blinding sunlight *Spook the sponsors*. What a crock. ♦

Far below the surface of the Gulf of Mexico, one of the first treasures of its kind can be found. It's an artificial reef, created from a former Phillips Petroleum production platform.

And while you can't see it, this reef has attracted the attention of hundreds of species of fish. As a result, this is something that has also been attracting the attention of many commercial as well as recreational fishermen.

Although we left this underwater paradise years ago, we took with us an unforgettable picture of life that will remain deep within us all. And it is one which will endure for generations to come. To us, that's what it means to be the performance company.

PHILLIPS PETROLEUM COMPANY

To understand our concern for the environment, sometimes you have to look beneath the surface.

To find out more about environmental innovations from Phillips, write to: Rigs to Reefs, Phillips Petroleum Company, 16 D-2 Phillips Building, Bartlesville, OK 74004.

HENNESSY

Martini

Discover this classic. Combine 2 oz. of Hennessy V.S and a squeeze of lemon over ice. Stir gently, don't shake. Strain into a chilled martini glass. Or ask your bartender.

40% Alc/Vol (80°)